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Connecting School Counselors...Supporting Students

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GSCA Executive Office
1827 Powers Ferry Road
Building 14, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339
Ph: 770-971-6002
info@gaschoolcounselor.com

From Your GSCA President

Torri Jackson

Greetings, School Counselors!

We are pleased to present the annual, highly informative GSCA Journal to you this year. GSCA proudly offers the Journal as our very own research-based publication for our members. Within the Journal you will have access to a plethora of articles that will empower you to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs for the success of your students and advocate for the profession and the students you serve.

I must thank Dr. Karen Rowland, Editor, and her esteemed editorial board for their tireless efforts soliciting and editing articles for this publication. They have worked diligently to provide Georgia's school counselors, graduate students, and counselor educators with a great opportunity for professional growth based on counselors' needs. I cannot thank you enough for highlighting the work of school counselors and their beneficial research in this way. I must also thank the authors who are published in the Journal. The articles are well written and insightful, and I am certain all of GSCA will gain from the shared knowledge.

Be sure to read the Journal from cover-to-cover to gain the most out of this professional learning experience. I hope you enjoy the GSCA Journal as you continue to provide essential services to Georgia's students.

Sincerely,
Torri Jackson
2016-2017 GSCA President

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From Your GSCA Journal Editor

Dr. Karen D. Rowland

by Karen D. Rowland, PhD, NCC, LPC

"School Counselors, Lifeline of the School, Heart of the Community" is the theme for GSCA for the 2016 – 2017 academic year, chosen by our president, Torri Jackson. According to Wikipedia, a lifeline may refer to support, care, and emergency services, all roles or responsibilities that school counselors perform on a consistent basis. Because professional school counselors are school leaders and agents of change, they are in a prime position to serve as a life line for all students as well as be a heart that cares in the community in which they serve. It is the hope of this journal that school counselors, particularly in the state of Georgia will find the articles helpful in understanding the need to be a voice for their students.

The articles in this edition of the journal, though varied in their focus all illustrate the importance of the school counselor in providing counseling programs that demonstrate being a life line in the school and a heart in the community.

Once again, it is my honor and pleasure to share with you the work that your colleagues have done and are continuing to do in their role as school counselors, school counselor supervisors, school counselor educators and school counselors-in-training. I hope that you are encouraged to write and share what you are doing as you provide that life line in your school and a heart in your community!

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Exploring Pre-Service Training and School Counselor Interns Use of the ASCA Model Tasks

Aaron Oberman
Associate Professor
The Citadel
171 Moultrie St., Charleston, SC 29409
aaron.oberman@citadel.edu

Jeannine Studer
Professor Emerita
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
jstuder@utk.edu

Abstract

Activities performed by school counselor interns perform that are related to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model and Performance Standards were explored in this study. Interns were more likely to perform tasks that included individual and small group counseling, monitoring student progress, and conducting individual planning with parents. School counseling interns were less likely to meet with an advisory board, plan programs with the administration, and perform tasks associated with the management system.

Keywords: ASCA Model, school counseling, interns

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Use of the ASCA Model Tasks

The profession of school counseling has been in existence since the beginning of the industrial revolution (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), and the discipline of school counseling continues to make significant advancements; most notably with the development of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Model. While ASCA (2012) continues to advocate for school counselors to serve as leaders of a comprehensive, developmental school counseling (CDSC) program, the profession continues to struggle with the differences between recommended practices, and what actually takes places in school settings (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Role Confusion

Despite ASCA's efforts to define and educate stakeholders, current literature continues to reveal that the professional school counselor's position is misunderstood (Dahir, 2004; Payne 2011). While some differences may be accounted for based on employment at an elementary, middle, or high school (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012), a lack of job consistency persists for professional school counselors (Moyer, 2011; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

The 3rd edition of the ASCA Model (2012) recommends that 80% of one's time is focused on direct student services that include the core curriculum, individual student planning, and responsive services. The remaining 20% of time is to be used conducting indirect student services such as program planning time and school

support. While the Model provides direction for best practices the counselor must also be proactive in helping stakeholders to clearly understand school counselor education and training that mirror their role within the school environment. Communicating the school counselor's role assists in increasing an awareness of counseling versus non-counseling related tasks, as well as specifying the types of direct student services provided by the professional school counselor. Burnham and Jackson (2000) indicated that school counselors at all levels spend a large amount of time conducting indirect activities; tasks that pull their time away from performing more appropriate duties. Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) supported these findings, and reported that school counselors preferred to spend more time focusing on "positive student outcomes" and less time on non-counseling tasks (p. 455). More recently, Payne (2011) surveyed secondary school counselors in Michigan and found a "moderate to strong relationship" between working in a CDSC program and job satisfaction. This study supported the work of Studer, Diambra, Breckner and Heidel (2011) who reported higher levels of job satisfaction among primary/elementary counselors when compared to middle and high school counselors because of more frequent engagement in direct services. While the school counselor should be a team player within the school environment, s/he should also be an advocate for participating in tasks that benefit the overall school environment.

Role definition and professional identity are additional challenges for the professional school counselor. The ASCA (2011) position statement calls for the engagement of school counselors in the following components of the ASCA National Model: (a) foundation, (b) delivery, (c) management, and (d) accountability. These components provide a road map for a CDSC program that meets the needs of all students; however, the counselor also needs to be in a school where the stakeholders value the counseling department (Paisley &McMahon, 2001). Furthermore, school counselors need to view the ASCA Model as an asset, that its implementation can positively change the daily work environment (Scarborough & Luke, 2008).

The School Counselor Intern

Educating and training students about the importance of implementing a CDSC program is increasingly important because the school counseling profession is regularly targeted for budget cuts. The Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) echoes this assertion in their 2016 Standards through the mandate that counselor education programs teach the skills and practice to design, implement, manage, and evaluate CDSC programs. Although program faculty educate and work with school counselor practitioners in understanding and developing a CDSC program, not all programs have fully implemented or embraced the ASCA Model (Blakely, 2009; Oberman et al., 2009). While not all school counseling programs are CACREP accredited, the training standards set by this organization serve as a benchmark for school counselor training programs.

Recent research has shown that many school counselor interns are learning about a CDSC program during their clinical experiences (Blakely, 2009; Leuwerke, Bruinekool, & Lane, 2008; Oberman et al., 2009); however, the extent to which this training occurs continues to vary throughout the literature (Myrick, 2011). Leuwerke

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et. al. (2008) examined the time logs of school counseling interns from elementary, middle, and high school placements, and found that the tasks most often completed by elementary and middle school interns were classroom guidance and individual counseling, which are consistent with the direct service expectations set forth by the ASCA Model. However, high school interns reported more frequent engagement in indirect activities such as planning, professional development, consultation, and administrative tasks. This disparity is consistent among high school counselors as well, as these counselors reported practicing within a CDSC program less often than elementary and middle school counselors (Baker & Gelter, 2008; Myrick, 2011; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

Oberman et al. (2009) surveyed practicing school counseling supervisors of school counseling interns to compare their perceptions of the tasks they performed that were associated with the ASCA National Model, compared with those tasks conducted by their school counselor interns. While some tasks were similar, there were still significant differences ($p < .05$) in the frequency in which counselors and interns spent on identical activities such as making appropriate referrals, discussing program planning strategies with administrators, managing the school counselor program, monitoring student academic achievement, consulting with parents and teachers, and evaluating the overall school counseling program. It is noted that although some of these tasks do require a more complex understanding of the community and resources, a concerted effort should be made to expose interns to these activities because when school counseling students matriculate into a professional school counselor position they are often expected to have the same knowledge and skills as a more experienced member of the profession.

Purpose of the Study

The ASCA National Model has been existence for over a decade and is considered by most in the field to be the hallmark of a solid CDSC program, with benefits supported through numerous studies (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003; Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008). However, while many of the studies have focused on the implementation of this programming by the professional school counselor, the research on this topic does not focus on the extent to which the school counselor intern is exposed to the various components. For instance, Blakely (2009) focused on the role of supervision at schools using the ASCA Model compared to programs who did not; however, there was not an emphasis on the utilization of the ASCA Model as part of the internship experience by the school counselor intern. In this present study, a CDSC program is defined as one that is implementing the ASCA Model framework. A non-CDSC program is defined as a program that is not implementing the ASCA Model, or is currently working towards establishing these components into their program. The purpose of this exploratory investigation was to determine school counselor interns' perceptions and observations of the activities conducted during their internship experience, and the frequency with which they engaged in activities supportive of a CDSC program.

Research Question

- What is the frequency in which school counselor interns perform activities reflective of those supported by the ASCA National Model?

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Methodology Participants

A sample of 50 of the over 200 CACREP accredited school counseling programs were randomly selected to gain a better understanding of the tasks related to the ASCA Model that are being conducted by school counselor interns. A total of 10 school counseling programs, which included 75 graduate students returned the surveys for a response rate of 20%. Although this 20% rate was lower than desired, a 23% response rate is normally found in psychology and education journals (Edwards et al., 2002). Female students comprised 88% (n = 66), and males 12% (n = 9) of the respondents. The average age of the participants was (M = 28.0, SD = 5.5), with a range from 22 to 52 years of age. The majority of school counselor interns 86% (n = 65) self-reported being educated and trained in a school counseling master's degree program that emphasized the ASCA National Model or their state school counseling model), compared to 12% (n = 9) who did not believe they were trained in a program that focused on the ASCA Model or respective state school counseling model. One student did not respond to this question. Additionally, 84% of the interns (n = 63) reported being placed in internship experiences in which the school counselor supervisors subscribed to a CDSC program, approximately 5% (n = 4), reported that their school site was in transition to a CDSC program, and 11% (n = 8) reported that their internship site was a non-CDSC program.

Procedure

The school counseling program coordinator was identified for the 50 randomly selected schools and was mailed a packet containing a letter addressed to him/ her explaining the purpose of the study, acknowledgement of IRB approval from the primary researcher's institution, with a request for the program coordinator to share this packet with the faculty member(s) who taught the school counselor internship class. The letter to the internship instructor also addressed the purpose of the study, and requested that the internship instructor provide the study questionnaire and informed consent to interested students to complete the survey without repercussions. The internship instructor was also given permission to make additional copies of the survey, if needed. A single, self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided for the instructor to mail back all the completed student intern surveys. The packets were sent during the middle of an academic semester to ensure that the school counselor interns had adequate time to conduct various tasks at their placement. After approximately three weeks, a reminder e-mail was sent to program coordinators to encourage study participation.

Instrument

The SCTS consisted of 22 questions divided into two sections: demographics and school counselor activities. The demographics section consisted of four questions regarding gender, age, student perceptions of their training program and its focus on the ASCA National Model, and the students' perceptions of whether their internship placement followed a CDSC program. The second section of the instrument was comprised of 18 questions based on the ASCA School Counselor Performance Standards. The participants were asked to indicate the types of tasks they were performing, and the frequency in which they performed these tasks using a four point Likert-type scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = usually). Sample questions included topics such as, planning and organizing the school

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counseling curriculum, individual and group counseling, consulting, making referrals, meeting with an advisory council, collecting and analyzing data, developing program strategies and meetings with the administration, program evaluation, monitoring student progress, and promoting student equity.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS by comparing the means to determine the rate of occurrence of each of the School Counselor Performance Standards, and conducting t-tests in conjunction with Levene's Test for Equality of Variances to determine the significance of all variables. The effect size was calculated for each comparison using Cohen's d.

Results

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the 18 School Counselor Performance Standards (ASCA, 2005). (See Table 1). Research Question one focused on how frequently the school counselor intern conducted the various activities contained in the School Counselor Performance Standards that are reflective of a CDSC program. The activities the interns performed "sometimes" to "usually" included conducting individual and small group counseling ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.49$), monitoring student progress ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.50$), and conducting individual planning with parents ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.70$). Conversely, the trainee was less likely to meet with an advisory board ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.06$), plan programs with the administration ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.95$), and perform other tasks associated with the Management System ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 0.96$).

Data Analysis

The purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the extent to which school counselor interns perceived they conducted tasks that supported a CDSC program during their internship. Regardless of their training program and/or the philosophical approach of their school internship site, school counselor interns conducted activities that are consistent with a CDSC program. This finding was in contrast to Blakely (2009) who reported that interns in a CDSC environment were more likely to utilize this framework than interns who were not.

The most frequently conducted activity for all school counselor interns regardless of internship placement was individual and group counseling. This information is not only an important part of a CDSC program, but also critical for the school counselor interns ability to engage in the direct student contact hours required by the CACREP even for interns not at a placement utilizing a CDSC program.

Some of the less frequently conducted tasks included meeting with an advisory council, program planning with the administration, and tasks associated with the management system. These results were supported in a separate study in which practicing school counselors who served as site supervisors reported that interns engaged in these tasks to a lesser extent (Oberman et al., 2009). It is possible that interns did not have exposure to these activities because they don't occur on a daily basis, and the intern may not be at the school when these tasks were completed during the academic year. In addition, interns are often focused on accumulating a set number of direct contact hours as part of the internship experience. This requirement could limit exposure to more comprehensive tasks the practicing school

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counselor performs on a yearly basis. Since there is a potential deficit in this area, practicing school counselors should be cognizant of exposing interns to opportunities that may be considered beyond the interns' developmental level (e.g. planning programs with the administration), but has the potential of increasing interns' awareness of several aspects integral to a CDSC program. The trainee will eventually be a fully functioning member of the profession, and it is imperative that the practicing counselor support the intern to gain greater exposure to the management system. At times, complete immersion into an activity is not practical or developmentally appropriate. In these instances, supervisors could consider inviting the intern to observe activities that are more complex, and providing time to process the experience after the event, or discussing various considerations related to a particular task. For example, the trainee may not have been present when the supervisor was working out the annual calendar of school counseling events. The supervisor could follow-up with the trainee during supervision or another convenient time to walk through the steps and reflect on this experience with the trainee.

Limitations

Although this preliminary study provides insight into the internship experience of the school counselor trainee, there are several limitations worth noting. The low response rate from the 50 randomly selected programs was a concern. Although the researchers selected CACREP-accredited school counseling programs from across the country, 12% of the participants were not trained from an ASCA National Model perspective. Therefore, the low response rate may be due to program area faculty not distributing the packets because they did not wish to reveal that they do not teach school counselor interns about the ASCA Model. The researchers also received communication from one program that there were no interns during the term selected, which may have been the case at other programs, too. Another possibility is that the program coordinator did not provide the packet of materials to the internship instructor due to personal time constraints, or the internship instructor did not have available time to distribute the materials within the internship class itself.

The self-report nature of this study was another weakness. With the number of participants who indicated that they were not being trained with the ASCA Model, it is possible that interns wished to be perceived as being trained in a program that is up-to-date on current trends or effective absent training from a CDSC perspective. Since the ASCA National Model is a proposed national standard for school counseling programs, it is possible that some interns responded in a way to indicate that they were participating in a greater number of activities that support the standards.

Implications

The importance of incorporating experiences that reflect the philosophy of the ASCA National Model (2012) into all aspects of the profession of school counseling is an opportunity for school counselor interns, practicing school counselors, and counselor educators. At times, school counselor interns miss essential opportunities when they are not exposed to all of the tasks conducted by the professional school counselor. This discrepancy could create an unrealistic performance expectation by evaluators, particularly among those who are not aware of contemporary school counselor training and education, or who

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have the unrealistic belief that these novice school have the same training and experiences as their more experiences professional colleagues. A greater emphasis on the implementation of tasks appropriate to a CDSC program at all training levels, and continued conversations among school counselors and administrators will help to narrow this gap between training and practice (Scarborough & Culbreth, 2008).

In addition, school counselor practitioners and interns who have not had the benefit of learning about the ASCA National Model are able to attend professional development activities such as state and national conferences, or participate in webinars and other educational events sponsored by the ASCA to help fill-in potential training gaps. Furthermore, interns and practitioners who have not incorporated a CDSC program could map out the activities they are conducting within the components of the Model to recognize the integration of these tasks (Oberman & Studer, 2012). The school counselor and trainee might work together to map out selected components or targeted areas that the trainee could help the school counselor to implement pieces of the ASCA National Model. For example, the school counselor and trainee could work together to develop and align the mission of the school counseling program with the school and district wide missions, or possibly focus on creating assessment tools to help improve the data collection/analysis practices to further demonstrate the importance and overall effectiveness of the school counseling program to the overall school mission.

Furthermore, school counselor supervisors have a professional obligation to facilitate educational training by gaining knowledge that reflects the best practices in counseling and program effectiveness, and sharing this knowledge with their interns. Many of the current practicing school counselors in the field were not trained in a comprehensive model, yet they may be in a position to train new interns about the ASCA Model including the accompanying ethical standard if the interns are placed from an institution that expects exposure to this argued advancement (i.e., implementation and use of the ASCA or another state Model) (ASCA Ethical Standard, F.1. e). Collaboration with counselor education faculty members is an important part of the overall supervisor process to help ensure the trainee has experiences consistent with current trends in the field, as well as the day-to-day role and function of the professional school counselor. Further, it would also be helpful for the school counselor to attend professional conferences at the national or state level to help them in maintaining a current knowledge of available resources and trends within the profession. Additionally, counselor education faculty members who specialize in school counseling have a responsibility to expose students to the ASCA or other state models and teaching best practices and strategies (Akos & Scarborough, 2004), as well as placing interns in the best possible school site.

Future Directions

The results of this exploratory study provided insight into the activities that school counselor interns engage as they learn about a leadership role within a program that is representative of the ASCA National Model. Additional research is recommended with a more robust group of participants to provide greater insight as to the types of tasks school counselor interns conduct. With the educational agenda evident in our society school counselors have a

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greater responsibility to assure that school counselor interns are engaged in activities that promote student success and exposed to activities that are associated with best practices.

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Table 1

Activities Conducted by all Interns in Rank Order from Least to Most Frequently

Performance Standards (n= 75)	M	SD
Meets with Advisory Board	2.21	1.06
Plans Programs with Admin.	2.55	0.95
Management System	2.60	0.96
Conducts Program Evaluation	2.72	1.07
Analyzes Data	2.77	0.99
Collects Data	2.89	0.95
Puts Together a Calendar	2.95	1.08
Individual Planning (Students)	3.08	0.83
Refers Students	3.24	0.88
Delivers the Guidance Curriculum	3.27	0.64
Promotes Student Equality	3.29	0.82
Evaluates Student Progress	3.31	0.81
Plans the Guidance Curriculum	3.32	0.76
Consults with Staff	3.35	0.85
Comprehensive Program	3.43	0.76
Individual Planning (Parents)	3.67	0.70
Monitors Student Progress	3.67	0.50
Individual/Group Counseling	3.80	0.49

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What is Group Process?: Integrating Process Work into Psychoeducational Groups

Bethany Mills, B.A., M.C.
114 Keystone Terrace, West, Lethbridge, AB
Email: bethany.glaister@uleth.ca
Phone: (403) 394-6026
Dawn Lorraine McBride, Ph.D.,
Registered Psychologist, Associate Professor
University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, AB
Email: dawn.mcbride@uleth.ca
Phone: (403) 317-2877

Abstract

Process work has long been a tenet of successful counseling outcomes. However, there is little literature available that focuses on how to best integrate process work into group settings–particularly psychoeducational groups that are content heavy and most often utilized in a school setting. In this article, the authors provide an overview of the literature that is available on process work with an emphasis on clearly delineating the principles of group process. In addition, we also outline specific, process-based guidelines and techniques that school counselors can use to help integrate process work into their psychoeducational group practice.

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What is Group Process?: Integrating Process Work into Psychoeducational Groups

Psychoeducational counseling groups (PEGs) are a well known tool used by counselors working in a school setting. Moreover, there is ample research that supports the validity and effectiveness of PEGs in a school setting (see Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brown, 2011; Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2010; Paisley & Milsom, 2006). These types of groups can help relay information to a larger body of clients (Borders & Drury, 1992), mesh with many individuals' experiences in a school setting (Corey et al., 2010), offer a developmentally appropriate venue through which to impart and discuss information (Akos, Hamm, Mack, & Dunaway 2006; Corey et al., 2010), and provide students with a safe environment in which to practise new skills (Drum 2006). In research conducted by Champe and Rubel (2012), they found that integration of process work into such groups has been linked to increased knowledge acquisition of the topic(s) covered. This outcome raises the question, What exactly is process work, and how does one best integrate this into time-sensitive, content-heavy PEGs?.

While process work is not a new term to the counseling field, we have observed that an in-depth understanding of process work and its integration into counseling settings is a challenge for many novice counselors. Furthermore, according to Champe and

Rubel (2012), while some process-based guidelines do exist, there is little literature available that outlines methods through which to integrate process into PEGs. As such, our main aims in this article are to review the literature on process work as a way of increasing understanding of this topic and to provide practitioners with guidelines and specific techniques on how to integrate process into a psychoeducational group counseling setting.

The Efficacy of Group Approache

Prior to exploring the literature on process work, it is important to address and provide support for group approaches. Gumaer (as cited in Margot & Warren, 1996) stated, "People are born in groups, live in groups, work in groups, become ill in groups, and so why not treat them in groups" (para. 7). According to Drumm (2006), group work is a powerful therapeutic endeavor that can result in an atmosphere of mutual aid. In this setting, members learn to identify and voice their own needs, realize similarities and differences, form connections with others, and practice new skills in an environment of inclusion and respect (Drumm, 2006).

To provide further evidence of the efficacy of group work, Yalom and Leszcz (2005) stated, "A persuasive body of outcome research has demonstrated unequivocally that group therapy is a highly effective form of psychotherapy and that it is at least equal to individual psychotherapy in its power to provide meaningful benefit" (p. 1). McRoberts, Burlingame, and Hoag's (1998) meta-analytic review supported this assertion. These researchers analyzed 23 outcome studies completed between 1950 and 1997 that compared the effectiveness of group therapy versus individual therapy. From their in-depth analysis of these studies, they concluded there were no significant differences in therapeutic outcomes when group versus individual counseling approaches were used. As the most influential group in the lives of adolescents is often their peers (Akos et al., 2006), it follows that counseling with this population may be most effective in a group setting. Gumaer (as cited in Margot & Warren, 1996) supported this statement and noted that there is no better environment in which youth may learn than within their peer group. Consequently, counselors working in the school setting can maximize students' learning through group experiences.

Use of Process in Group Work

Process has been defined as the meta-communicational aspects of interactions between group members (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). The focus in group process work is to try to understand the nature of the relationship between members in a group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). While content involves looking at what specifically was said, process involves looking at the how and the why behind what was said (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). At the heart of process work is "identifying the connection between the communication's actual impact and the communicator's intent" (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005, p. 143). According to Yalom and Leszcz (2005), when counselors utilize a process-based orientation they ask themselves, "What do these explicit words, the style of the participants, the nature of the discussion, tell us about the interpersonal relationship of the participants?" (p. 143).

Experts in the field discussed four essential components of process work: an in-depth understanding of the different stages of group development (Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), a focus on the

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here and now (Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), the facilitation of process commentary (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), and the use of silence (Harris, 1988). The next section provides an overview of these essential components of process work.

Stages of Group Development

The importance of having an awareness of the different stages or processes that a PEG can go through is crucial to the facilitation of a successful group (Corey et al., 2010; Jones & Robinson, 2000; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Furthermore, having an in-depth understanding of group stages of development is an ethical responsibility of group facilitators, as noted in Ethical Standard B.2 of the Association for Specialists in Group Work: Best Practice Guidelines 2007 Revisions (Thomas & Pender, 2008, p. 115). One main reason for having such an understanding is that "group activities [and interventions utilized] must be appropriately timed in consideration of the group stage" (Jones & Robinson, 2000, pp. 356–357). Moreover, having such an understanding can also provide insight into the dynamics and processes that can occur in a group setting (Corey et al., 2010; Thompson, 2011; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), offer a framework for working with resistance and selecting stage-appropriate interventions (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Corey et al., 2010; Gold, 2008; Jones & Robinson, 2000), and provide insight into the underlying needs of members at different stages in the group's development (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Corey et al., 2010).

Here-And-Now Focus

A here-and-now focus involves encouraging group members to center in on what is occurring for them at the present moment in time within the group setting (Corey at al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). This can include a focus on members' thoughts, feelings, sensations in their body, atmosphere in the room, and the underlying reasons behind behaviors that have just occurred (Corey et al., 2010). Utilizing a here-and-now focus is a crucial aspect of process work, as this type of directed attention can result in increased (a) group therapy power and effectiveness (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005); (b) insight into how members behave in the outside world, as this will be represented by how they interact with other in the group setting (Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005); (c) emotional quality of interactions (Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005); (d) likelihood of improving members' interpersonal relationships outside the group (Corey et al., 2010); (e) ability to move the group process to the next stage (Corey et al., 2010); and (f) opportunities for all members to participate, regardless of what they may be experiencing (Corey et al., 2010). According to Yalom and Leszcz (2005), for a here-and-now focus to be therapeutic, reflections on these experiences need to occur (i.e., process commentary).

Process Commentar

Yalom and Leszcz (2005) discussed process commentary in terms of illumination. Process illumination occurs when group members are able to examine themselves in the here and now, study the transactions in the group, and then transcend the pure here-and-now focus to integrate that experience into learning outside of the group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Stated more simply, after a here-and-now group interaction, the process commentary would consist of reflections on the interaction that had just occurred. According to Yalom and Leszcz (2005), ensuring that process commentary occurs immediately after a here-and-now interaction is a crucial aspect of process

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work, as process commentary is believed to promote the transfer of learning from the group setting into life outside the group, help in the retention of learning gained from the group, and enable members to identify and alter their problematic behaviors.

The Use of Silence

Silence in counseling has been referred to as problematic by researchers and practitioners alike (see Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). However, in alignment with Harris's (1988) view, silence also has the potential to be a powerful tool and may be essential to the development of process work in a group setting. According to Harris, silence in a group can indicate important underlying group dynamics, such as conflict, group ease, and times of deep reflection.

Silence allows time for (a) group members to reflect on the topics that arise in a group setting, (b) group leaders to reflect on what has just happened and how to best proceed, (c) the processing of intense group interactions, (d) the grounding of group members, and (e) periods of well deserved rest from what can be an intense experience (Harris, 1988). As the focus in PEGs is usually on getting through a large body of information, the powerful use of silence may often be overlooked. Group leaders who allow for periods of silence, in addition to the previously mentioned benefits, can help promote the development of a healthy, more effective, well established group (Harris, 1988). In addition, Harris (1988) encouraged PEG facilitators to use silence as a means through which to amplify the connections between members. As Harris stated, "Feeling at one with others is a powerful experience, and the feeling is often most intense when we do not convey it with words" (para. 11).

Guidelines for Integrating Process Work into Psychoeducational Groups

Champe and Rubel (2012) eloquently described the balancing act that exists between process and content in PEGs as follows: "Too much focus on group process risks veering into the territory of therapy groups, while too much focus on content and conceptual learning risks merely teaching to people sitting in a circle" (p. 74). In Champe and Rubel's discussion of how counselors can integrate process work into PEGs, they identified four key counselor tasks: create a safe group environment, engage members in each other's learning, explore members' relationships to PEG content, and return promptly to the PEG content being covered.

Create a Safe Group Environment

In creating a safe group environment, the techniques used by counselors should vary depending on the stage of group development. In the forming stage, activities should be low risk (e.g., facilitator-selected dyad activities and round-robin check-ins) and aimed at assisting members in getting to know each other and in expressing their fears and concerns about the group (Corey et al., 2010; Jones & Robinson, 2000). In the storming stage, activities should be more intense, high risk (e.g., member-selected partners and popcorn check-in rounds or activities), and aimed at facilitating member-to-member interactions that directly and respectfully address conflict (Corey et al., 2010). In the norming stage, activities continue to be more intense and high risk and are intended to encourage the open exchange of applicable interpretations of self and others in the group, to continue to support appropriate conflict resolution, and to involve the demonstration

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of respect for differences in the opinions of group members (Fall & Wejnert, 2005). In the performing stage, activities continue to be more intense and high risk and are intended to encourage member self-disclosure, to involve more than one member or the entire group, and to focus mainly on here-and-now group interactions (Jones & Robinson, 2000). Finally, in the adjourning stage, activities should return to being low risk and less intense in nature, with the intention of reviewing the learning gained from the group and helping members prepare for the group's ending (Corey et al., 2010; Jones & Robinson, 2000).

It is important to note that not all group members may progress through the these stages at the same time (Corey et al., 2010). Thus, group facilitators need to reflect on the stage of group development as an entire entity when planning group activities in advance and to be prepared to adjust activities or interventions in the moment based on the stage of development of individual group members.

Engage Members in Each Other's Learning

The following approaches may help the facilitator engage members in each other's learning: utilize a here-and-now focus, facilitate process commentary, and utilize silence. A here-and-now focus can help facilitate member-to-member learning and interactions, as all members can participate regardless of their experience (Corey et al., 2010; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Moreover, the focus is on what is occurring for everybody in the room, not on the different experiences that have occurred for members in their pasts, which can result in storytelling and the subsequent disengagement of other members (Corey et al., 2010). Silence can be used as a basis through which to explore dynamics occurring between members in a group and allow for the processing of these interactions to occur (Harris, 1988). Corey et al. (2010) highlighted the importance of looking for opportunities to link members' work. In PEGs that are typically characterized by a focus on an overarching topic, using activities appropriate to the current group stage (i.e., dyad, triad, and entire group activities) that facilitate interactions between members regarding the topics at hand can also help to deepen the connections among group members.

Explore Members' Relationship to Psychoeducational Group Content

Yalom and Leszcz (2005) noted that it is critical for group facilitators to reflect on the host of factors that may underlie an interaction in the group setting. In a PEG, this will also involve the consideration of the ways in which what is occurring in the group relates to the topic (or topics) being covered (Furr, 2000). Once again, allowing for periods of silence may provide much needed opportunities for members to reflect on their relationships to the topics being discussed (Harris, 1988). PEG facilitators should ask themselves the following crucial questions when deciding which interaction (or interactions) to bring to the group's attention and dissect further (i.e., engage in process commentary): What are the group's immediate needs (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005)?, How does this relate to the content of the group (Furr, 2000)?, and How can it be used to further members' learning of this content (Furr, 2000)? When taking into account the group's immediate needs, reflection on the stage of group development and the usual member needs at that stage can provide a helpful guideline for facilitators when asking themselves these questions. Allowing for silences in a

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group setting can enable group leaders to adequately reflect on these questions.

Return Promptly to the Psycho-educational Group Content Being Covered

As the main focus of a PEG is on content (Brown, 2011; Champe & Rubel, 2012; Corey et al., 2010; Furr, 2000), it is important to have strategies in place to integrate process work that assists in further facilitating members' understanding of the concepts being covered (Furr, 2000). Furr (2000) recommended that PEG facilitators think through the purpose of the exercises they have planned and preplan process-based questions prior to the start of each session. The overarching goals of these process-based questions should be to help facilitate the members' understanding of the topic being covered and their experiences related to that topic (Furr, 2000).

Kees and Jacobs (as cited in Furr, 2000) recommended that processing questions start at the concrete level before proceeding to the more abstract level. For example, facilitators can first ask what happened during the activity itself and then ask what the experience of completing the activity was like for members (Furr, 2000). This line of processing questions can then be followed by a discussion of how completing the activity affected the group as a whole and how the insight or learning gained from the activity could be applied to members' lives outside the group (Furr, 2000). The guidelines discussed in this section provide a way for group facilitators to integrate the benefits of process work into a PEG, without losing sight of the main aim of the group (i.e., teaching content related to a specific topic).

Process-Orientated Techniques to Integrate Process Work into PEG's

Ruth Middleman (1978), a well known and extensively published author in the field of group counseling theory and practice, proposed the following process techniques: amplifying subtle messages, reaching for feeling and information links, redirecting and toning down strong messages, and scanning. Group facilitators can use these techniques to assist them in achieving the key tasks outlined by Champe and Rubel (2012). To better exemplify these techniques, we provide examples based on a PEG geared towards adolescents with low self-esteem.

Amplifying Subtle Messages

Middleman (1978) described the skill of amplifying subtle messages as observing and calling attention to inconsistencies in a member's actions, body language, and thoughts when other members do not appear to notice these inconsistencies. In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, this could involve pointing out inconsistencies between the way a member says a positive affirmation and his or her body language. This could also involve a group discussion of members' reactions when another member shares his or her experiences with issues related to self-esteem (which can also help to engage members in each other's learning and maintain a content focus). For example, the group facilitator may say,

> Susie, I noticed that when you said, I am good enough, your voice was low and quiet, and you were hunched over in your chair. I am thinking that you might not really believe this? I am wondering if you could say this again with a focus on what your body and tone of voice might be like if you really believed that you were good enough?

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Alternatively, the facilitator could say,

> I noticed that when Katie shared that her self-doubt tells her she can't do something or shouldn't try something other group members appeared to have a physical reaction to this. Some of you nodded your heads and others tensed their shoulders. I am wondering if we could discuss as a group what was going on for everybody when Katie shared about her self-doubt?

Reaching for a Feeling Link

Middleman (1978) described this skill as focusing on normalizing members' experiences through facilitating the connections of similar feelings among group members. In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, this could involve the use of feeling-based activities, such as an interactive group discussion in the performing stage of a group in which members discuss different feelings associated with their experience of low self-esteem (which also engages members in each other's learning, maintains a content focus, and explores members' relationship to the topic at hand).

Reaching for an Information Link

Middleman (1978) described this skill as inviting other members to relate to and connect with the ideas, beliefs, or opinions that another member has expressed. In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, this could involve highlighting the similarities that arise surrounding the thoughts, beliefs, and opinions associated with members' experience of low self-esteem. Again, this type of a strategy can help to engage members in each other's learning, maintain a content focus, and explore members' relationship to the content at hand.

Redirecting a Message

Middleman (1978) described this skill as asking members to directly address each other, instead talking about one another to others in the group setting (i.e., facilitating the use of "I" statements). In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, this could involve asking members to tell other group members how their actions or words have affected their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, or level of self-esteem–either positively or negatively..

Scanning

Middleman (1978) described this skill as paying attention to the whole group through the use of one's eyes. In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, this could involve scanning the room and paying particular attention to how other members are reacting to the topics being discussed or other members' sharing. The focus would be on identifying the needs of the group (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), as well as identifying opportunities to further members' learning of the content (Furr, 2000), in this case self-esteem. Group facilitator scanning can be used as a vehicle to bring attention to members' here-and-now interactions and facilitate process commentary on those interactions, which may help to further members' learning about self-esteem.

Toning Down Strong Messages

Middleman (1978) described this skill as "verbalizing the essence of a highly affective message so that the strength of the affect is reduced and message can be 'heard'" (p. 24). In a PEG for adolescents with low self-esteem, many members may believe that they cannot accomplish something and that they are not worthy or are lacking in some way (Young, 2009). As such, members in this sort of a group

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may be particularly sensitive to perceived assaults pertaining to their sense of identity. Thus, focusing on toning down strong messages through encouraging an I versus other focus can help support the development of an internal locus of control over members' self-esteem as opposed to an external locus of control.

Conclusion

Counseling in a school setting offers many unique challenges, such as a large number of clients, limited counseling time, and balancing the educational and psychological needs of clients. Offering PEGs in a school setting is one method through which school counselors can work to meet the needs of a larger number of clients, create new relationships among peers, and convey important information.

Process work has been identified as an integral factor contributing to successful group therapy outcomes (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). One reason for this is that process work has been found to increase knowledge acquisition of the topics covered in group therapy settings (Champe & Rubel, 2012). As such, having an in-depth understanding of process-based guidelines and specific techniques counselors can use to help them achieve these guidelines may help contribute to more successful PEG outcomes.

It is our hope that readers and users of the information contained within this article will gain a better understanding of process work. Moreover, by outlining process-based guidelines and specific process-based techniques, we hope that practitioners working in a school setting can readily incorporate process work into their group practice. Finally, as process work has been identified as such a valuable counseling tool (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Corey et al., 2010; Harris, 1988; Middleman, 1978; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005), it is our hope that further learning and research into this important area will be stimulated.

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The Effects of a Cross-age Peer Mentoring Program on School Connectedness with Rural Populations

Sarah Elizabeth Cravey Kraus, Ed.S
Emanuel County Schools
ekraus@emanuel.k12.ga.us

Richard E. Cleveland, Ph.D
Georgia Southern University
rcleveland@georgiasouthern.edu

Abstract

School-based mentoring continues to attract both attention and criticism among school leaders and researchers. This practitioner-university collaboration examined mentees' reported levels of school connectedness after a nine-week cross-age mentoring intervention. This study of 47 mentees attending a rural, low socioeconomic status (100% FRL) school investigated participants' school connectedness scores. Global school connectedness mean scores increased for all participants. Participants in the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant increases on the "Self-in-Future" subscale.

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The Effects of a Cross Age Peer Mentoring Program on School Connectedness with Rural Populations

In the United States, high school dropout rates continue to be a formidable concern, with some characterizing the problem as a national crisis (Heppen & Bowles Therrialt, 2008). A review of the literature recognizes the role of significant life events (e.g., pregnancy, unemployment, trauma) as well as salient indicators that, if noticed by schools, faculty, administration, families, and communities, can potentially ameliorate conditions leading towards dropping out of high school (Balfanz, 2009; Neild, Balfanz, & Herzog, 2007). Research exploring such indicators crucial for high school completion has identified factors such as course completion, discipline, and attendance (Allensworth & Easton, 2005; Heppen & Bowles Theirralt, 2007; Neild et al., 2007). In their exploration of predictors of high school dropout MacIver and MacIver (2009) recognize common "ABC" (i.e., absenteeism, behavior problems, and course failures) factors, but turn the discussion of high school dropout prevention towards addressing student disengagement or, student-school disconnectedness.

According to Karcher, Davis, and Powell (2002), poor attendance, behavior problems, and low course completion are increasingly viewed as products of student disconnectedness to/from school, teachers, peers, and parents. One

response to this crisis of disconnection has been to develop programs that promote students' sense of belonging and keep them connected during periods of transition. Specifically, such programs often target early middle grades for building a sense of school connectedness in hopes such efforts will begin to have the most significant effect on continued student performance, attendance, behavior, and (ultimately) graduation. Karcher's (2008a) cross-age mentoring program (CAMP) specifically addresses increasing school connectedness among students at risk of dropping out. The program facilitates high school students mentoring younger (e.g., middle school) students. The CAMP program has demonstrated positive effects for mentees as well as for mentors, including increased student leadership, collaboration skills, student connectedness, self-esteem, and academic achievement (Karcher, 2008a; 2008b; 2009).

Despite the benefits of mentoring interventions, educational leaders and administrators may be hesitant to dedicate requisite time and resources to such programs noting scant statistically significant findings for whole samples (Bernstein et al., 2009). However, as Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes (2012) point out, secondary analyses of such data often reveal noteworthy variability underscoring the importance of continuing research exploring different subgroup populations (i.e., youth subgroups).

The current study sought to examine student connectedness using a modified version of the CAMP program (Karcher, 2008a). Participants were seventh grade students from a small middle/high school in rural southeast Georgia. In addition to furthering the CAMP research base (i.e., with rural populations), the researchers hoped the intervention would have a significant positive effect on school connectedness for participating students.

Definition of School Connectedness

Karcher, Holcomb, and Zambrano (2006) define connectedness as being a "movement towards others through positive affect and activity" (p. 2). Karcher et al. further describe it as "a student's response to feelings of relatedness and belonging . . . reflect[ing] adolescents' perception of their own involvement in and affection for others, activities, and organizations" (p. 2-3). This feeling of connection and association creates a sense of belonging for adolescents (as well as other ages within PK-12) with school being one of the most important organizations with which to be involved and associated (Karcher et al., 2006; Karcher, 2007).

Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, and Hawkins (2004) use the term "school bonding" for this condition of being connected to school, and include two elements in their definition: attachment and commitment. Attachment is described by the degree of affective relationships with others at school, while commitment is characterized by personal investment. This personal investment is two-fold, pertaining to both school (e.g., the school as entity) and doing well in school (e.g., experienced success in academic, personal/social, college/career-readiness, and/or other domains). Thompson, Iachan, Overpeck, Ross, and Gross (2006) identified indicators of school connectedness including: a sense of belonging at school, active engagement in school activities, and maintaining positive relationships with others. Finally, the Centers for Disease Control and

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Prevention (CDC, 2009) describe school connectedness as the "belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals" (p. 3).

Thus for the purposes of this study, a working definition of "school connectedness" would be comprised of both intra- and inter-personal components. Intra-personal aspects would include students' perceptions of relation, belonging, and commitment to both the school as an entity and the process of schooling (i.e., engaging in educational duties and responsibilities). Inter-personal aspects would address the degree to which students exhibit action towards establishing and maintaining relationships with others in the school (e.g., peers, faculty, staff, etc.).

The Effects of Student School Connectedness

A review of the literature suggests healthy effects associated with positive school connectedness (Catalano et al., 2004; King, Vidourek, Davis, & McClellan, 2002), as well as school connectedness serving as a protective factor against negative developmental outcomes (Whitlock, 2006). The CDC (2009) found school connectedness "to be the strongest protective factor for promoting positive academic and nonacademic outcomes for youth" (p. 3). Resnick et al. (1997) found that young people who reported feeling connected to their school were less likely to engage in many risky behaviors.

Similarly, multiple studies have detailed positive benefits associated with increasing students' school connectedness (Gordon, Downey, & Bangert, 2013; Karcher 2003; 2005; 2008a). Karcher et al. (2006) noted positive outcomes from increased school connectedness, suggesting that youth actively connected with school were less likely to engage in substance abuse, violent behavior, and other activities resulting in negative developmental consequences. Developmental mentoring programs are one approach that have been successfully employed to increase students' school connectedness (Karcher, 2008b; Karcher et al., 2002).

Cross-age Mentoring Programs

Karcher (2007; 2008a) defined "cross-age mentoring" as any school-based mentoring program that involved pairing older students (typically high school age) with younger students (typically seventh grade and under). Cross-age mentoring programs have reported positive results both intra-personally as well as outwards action exhibited (inter-personally). These results included increased positive learning experiences, positive attitude towards school, connections with peers, sense of agency, as well as improved attendance, academic skills, and statistically significant reductions in disciplinary referrals (Converse & Lignurgaris/Kraft, 2009; Dopp & Block, 2004; Karcher et al., 2002; 2009; King et al., 2002; Willis, Bland, Manka & Craft, 2012). These results all fit within the working definition of school connectedness as previously defined.

Research Question

This study was guided by the following research question: What differences in school connectedness exist between groups of middle school students when a cross-age peer mentoring program has been applied? Anecdotally, the researchers were interested in the feasibility of implementing a cross-age mentoring program within a rural school district.

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Methodology Participants

Participants for this study were seventh grade (mentee) and high school (mentor) students in a middle/high school in rural southeastern Georgia. The school provides instruction for students in grades sixth through twelfth, with a total population of approximately 600 students (47% female and 53% male). The racial composition of the school consisted of 62.1% Caucasian, 35.7 % African American, 0.2% Multiracial, 1.5% Hispanic, and 0.5% Asian students. Within public education, the free or reduced lunch (FRL) statistic is often used as an approximate indicator of student socioeconomic status (SES). For this study, 100% of students attending the school were eligible to receive free or reduced lunch, reflecting high levels of economic disadvantage. Two of the four seventh grade homerooms in the school were the focus of this study, with selected high school students serving as mentors. The treatment group was made up of the homeroom assigned the intervention of a cross-age peer mentor (n = 28), and the waitlist control group consisted of one of the other seventh grade homerooms (n = 19).

Research Design

This study used a quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of a cross-age peer mentoring program on participants' reported level of school connectedness. The study received full institutional IRB approval. All participants completed the Hemingway: Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (MAC) survey. One seventh grade homeroom was assigned to receive the intervention of a cross-age peer mentor, and participated in assigned peer mentoring activities for nine weeks. The other seventh grade homeroom served as a waitlist control group receiving the intervention following the study. It should be noted that the other two homerooms not participating in this study also received the intervention after the conclusion of the study.

Instrumentation

The researchers used the Hemingway: Measure of Adolescent Connectedness Survey (MAC) Adolescent Version 5.5: Grades 6–12 Short form (Karcher, 2001) to collect data regarding students' self-reported perceptions of connectedness. The instrument was administered to participants both before and after the cross-age peer mentoring program. As noted in Gordon et al. (2013), the Hemingway was designed to measure student perceptions of connectedness to four important adolescent worlds: Self, Family, School, and Friends. The Hemingway is a 40 item self-report survey that measures the degree to which adolescents care for and are involved in particular relationships and activities. The survey has 10 sub-scales, rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not at all true), to 5 (very true). This study looked at the six subscales Karcher (2003) related to school connectedness, namely: School, Teachers, Peers, Culturally Different Peers, Reading, and Self in the Future. The Hemingway has demonstrated test-retest reliability ranging from .69 to .91 (Gordon et al., 2013), and is characterized as displaying adequate internal consistency (Karcher, 2003; Karcher et al., 2008). Karcher (2001) confirmed the 10 construct factor structure with subscale Cronbach alphas ranging from weak to strong (i.e., r = .60 to r = .94).

Procedures

After verifying school administration interest, institutional IRB approval was

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secured. Next, school counselors had permission forms sent home with each potential participant. Individual participant surveys received identification markers to maintain confidentiality while aiding the researchers in tracking participants' data. CAMP intervention activities facilitated by school counselors addressed connectedness to school, teachers, peers, culturally different peers, reading, self in the future, attendance, behavior, and grades. These activities took place during the middle school exploratory period. Weekly classroom activities included an icebreaker, a school connectedness lesson, snack, and a group activity. This format had mentors and mentees working in pairs, but also engaging as a part of a larger group towards the end of the class period. The connectedness to peers, friends, family, self, parents, school, and reading curriculum was developed to include peer mentor activities to promote connectedness (Karcher, 2008a). Cross-age peer mentors received training and followed a structured list of mentoring activities at each meeting once a week. Students met with their mentor for nine weeks, once a week.

Upon completion of the intervention, participants completed the Hemingway again. Pre- and post-test data were compared after the intervention in order to compare the effects the cross-age peer mentoring program had on school connectedness. The independent variable was defined as students' participating in mentoring/non-mentoring groups. The dependent variable was school connectedness (MAC). Both treatment and control groups completed the Hemingway, before and following the cross-age peer mentoring period.

Data Analysis

Data analyses included a review of descriptive statistics assessing the normality of the data set and group mean scores. All statistical calculations and tests were conducted at alpha = 0.05.

Result

Preliminary analyses began with a review of the descriptive statistics for all Hemingway items. First, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis statistics for each item on the Hemingway were reviewed, considering both pre- and post-test administrations. Histograms for each Hemingway item (again, both pre- and post-test administrations) were then consulted. Results of this analysis indicated that while some items displayed skewness or kurtosis slightly beyond general expectations, none were beyond reasonable limits (Field, 2009; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The researchers determined that the data met the assumption of normality.

Next, the reliability of the dataset was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Reliability values for pre-test data are presented in Table 1 and post-test data in Table 2. Pre-test scores demonstrated low reliability for "School" and "Self-in-Future," while scores for "Teachers," "Reading," and "Peers" demonstrated moderate reliability. Post-test scores for "School," "Peers," and "Self-in-Future" demonstrated low reliability, while "Teachers" and "Reading" scores demonstrated moderate reliability. Overall, Hemingway global scores for both pre- (α= .763) and post-test (α= .852) demonstrated moderate to high reliability (Field, 2009). Most Hemingway subscales demonstrated moderate reliability with some demonstrating low reliability.

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Descriptive statistics for the Hemingway, both global and subscales, were reviewed and are presented in Table 3. Overall, both global and subscale mean scores continued to meet the assumption of normality. Additionally, mean scores increased between pre- and post-test administrations in both intervention (mentoring) and waitlist (non-mentoring) groups.

Finally, t-test analyses were used to investigate statistically significant differences in means between mentoring and non-mentoring groups. While both groups saw increases in mean differences, scores for the experimental group were not statistically significant. The difference between mentoring group participants' pre- and post-test mean scores for "Self-in-Future" subscale score did display a statistically significant value (.008).

Discussion

School counselors in this action research study implemented a cross-age mentoring program with middle school student mentees in a rural, impoverished area of the state of Georgia, United States. Results from the intervention demonstrated an increase in school connectedness mean scores as measured by the Hemingway MAC (Karcher, 2011) for both groups. Surprisingly, while participants receiving the intervention (i.e., cross-age peer mentoring) displayed statistically significant increases in the "Self-in-Future" subscale, increases in overall global MAC scores were not statistically significant. These results are consistent with previous studies where participants in cross-age peer mentoring programs experienced increases in various aspects of school connectedness (Karcher et al., 2002) even when such increases were not statistically significant.

This study uniquely contributes to mentoring literature in that while previous studies have called for specific attention to student populations facing developmental challenges and/or negative developmental consequences (e.g., "at-risk" youth), few have reported samples with comparable socieo-economic levels. Specifically, while some studies with comparable sample sizes have reported free or reduced lunch (FRL) levels ranging from 22-43% (Converse & Lignurgaris/Kraft, 2013; Gordon et al., 2013), many studies report only broad family income level (i.e., census data) common for the geographical region in which the study takes place (Karcher, 2008b; Karcher & Sass, 2010). Other studies report selecting participating students solely on the basis of "at-risk" status as defined by classroom teachers/staff perception (Karcher, 2005; Karcher, Davidson, Rhodes, & Hererra, 2010; Karcher et al., 2002). In the current study, all participants (regardless of group assignment) qualified as below the poverty line as indicated by the school's 100% FRL status.

Interestingly, participants in the experimental (mentoring) group demonstrated statistically significant increased scores on the "Self-in-future" subscale. Even though this was the only statistically significant increase for experimental participants, the finding is encouraging. In their study of 638 impoverished African-American youth (mean age = 15.85, SD = 1.42), So, Voisin, Burnside, and Gaylord-Harden (2016) found student future orientation associated with more positive school connectedness. Specifically, after controlling for gender, SES, and age, higher

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levels of participants' future orientation was positively correlated with increased student-teacher connection.

It should be noted that although results for the experimental group were found to be non-significant, the increase in school connectedness (i.e., global MAC scores) was valued by school site administration. Starting in the 2014 academic year, annual state evaluation measures for public schools required the inclusion of data pertaining to school climate. The resulting expectation is that schools not only report such data, but are actively engaged in interventions addressing school climate. Towards that end, the current study was considered successful in two regards. First, it aided site school counselors in providing a research-based intervention targeting school climate via school connectedness. This action postured school counselors within pertinent school improvement activities and clearly aligns with the call for increased evidence-based school counseling practices (American School Counselor Association, 2012; Erford, 2015). Secondly, and arguably more importantly to site administration, participants in both groups demonstrated increased school connectedness (i.e., global MAC scores). Again, the researchers fully acknowledge that such increases in the experimental (mentoring) group were non-significant and such information was presented to administration as well. However, in terms of state required school improvement reporting, these findings were considered beneficial on a practical level.

Limitations & Recommendations

Limitations of this study include small sample size, duration of intervention, and logistical challenges of the PK-12 school environment. While the number of participants is similar to other investigations of mentoring programs in the school setting, (Karcher, Davis, & Powell, 2002; Converse & Lignurgaris/Kraft, 2013) a larger sample size might prove more beneficial for future investigations. Further study is necessary replicating both site and population demographics.

While this study utilized a nine week mentoring intervention, school connectedness interventions in the literature range in duration from 18 weeks to spanning the entire academic year (Converse & Lignurgaris/Kraft, 2013; Karcher, 2005; Karcher, 2008b; Karcher, et al., 2010). Future research might benefit from employing longer duration interventions, gathering multiple data points throughout the academic year. Such data might provide a more comprehensive picture of students' levels of school connectedness as influenced by the continued intervention as well as environmental changes experienced across systemic levels (e.g., individual, classroom, whole school) throughout the school year.

Logistical challenges of the middle school environment also proved challenging. The original design of the study aimed to also review participants' attendance, discipline and English and Language Arts (ELA) grades. However, complications midway through the research project resulted in a sole focus on school connectedness. Similarly, competing school initiatives exerted influence over the execution of the research project. During the third week of the intervention, school administration required all students who had previously failed a state mathematics exam to attend mathematics remediation tutoring during the exploratory period (time during which the intervention occurred). Similarly, despite

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securing both participant and parent consent, participants involved in one of the school's athletic teams were not allowed to participate as the exploratory period was reserved for weight training.

These logistical challenges and their consequences (e.g., the previous limitation of small sample size) are representative of the complex nature of conducting research in the PK-12 school setting. However school counselors are well positioned to aid in conducting such investigations within the PK-12 environment through collaboration with state school counseling associations and/or university counselor-preparation program faculty. Such collaborative endeavors can yield systemic benefits impacting school counselors' comprehensive school counseling program (CSCP), school site broader needs (i.e., school improvement plan), and the surrounding community as well (Dimmitt, Carey, & Hatch, 2007; Kaffenberger & Young, 2013; Muro, Stickley, Muro, Blanco & Tsai, 2015).

Conclusion

Achieving optimal levels of student attendance and academic achievement, along with decreasing disciplinary referrals have consistently been areas targeted for school improvement. Similarly, these components have been identified as indicators for students at-risk of dropping out of high school. A review of the literature suggests increasing students' personal feelings of connectedness to school as one approach to ameliorate these concerns. One way to increase students' degree of school connectedness is through cross-age peer mentoring programs where relationships are built between more successful, connected students with struggling and/or disconnected students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of school counselors applying a cross-age peer mentoring program to impoverished (i.e., 100% FRL) students in the rural southeastern United States. Specifically, this study investigated individual students' levels of school connectedness. While all participants demonstrated increased global school connectedness, participants in the mentoring (experimental) group demonstrated statistically significant increases in the "Self-in-Future" subscale only. This study adds to the literature on cross-age mentoring and uniquely contributes findings relative to participants in impoverished, rural populations.

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Table 1

Hemingway subscale reliability: Pre-test

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
School	.379
Teachers	.666
Reading	.506
Peers	.556
Self-in-Future	.145

Table 2

Hemingway subscale reliability: Pre-test

Subscale	Cronbach's Alpha
School	.375
Teachers	.536
Reading	.605
Peers	.410
Self-in-Future	.391

Table 3

Hemingway Pre/Post Global Score Descriptive Statistics

	n	M	Median	Mode	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Whole Sample									
Pre-Test	47	211.809	210	196	24.102	-.534	.794	134	254
Post-Test	47	219.766	221	216	29.035	-.694	.963	134	276
		1.07							
Mentoring									
Pre-Test	28	210.679	205	198	18.415	.382	-1.445	186	243
Post-Test	28	218.357	216	216	30.365	-.565	.909	134	276
Non-Mentoring									
Pre-Test	19	213.473	223	226	31.160	-.910	.756	134	254
Post-Test	19	221.842	223	146	27.635	-.977	1.881	146	266
Individual/ Group Counseling		0.49							

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Effective Multicultural Supervision for a Culturally Diverse Country

Amanda Smith
Valdosta State University

Abstract

Living in a country based on the "salad bowl" of cultures philosophy, it is necessary for mental health professionals to be competent in providing effective counseling to heterogeneous clientele. Multicultural counseling ensures that professional counselors will deliver services matching the clients' needs, resulting in valuable treatment. Individuals wishing to become a counselor need guidance in multicultural counseling beyond the instruction given in a classroom. This can be accomplished during supervision from a multiculturally competent supervisor.

Effective Multicultural Supervision for a Culturally Diverse Country

As the population of the United States of America becomes increasingly diverse with more individuals immigrating to this country than ever before, the mental health field must be prepared to provide optimal services to this diverse population. According to the United States Census Bureau (2016), the estimated race of the population for 2014 was as follows: 62.1% would be identified as White, 17.4% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 13.2% identified as Black or African American, 5.4% identified as Asian, and the remaining 1.9% would be identified as Native Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander, or being of two or more races. The Census Bureau (2016) also estimated that in 2014, females would comprise 50.8% of the population, whereas males would comprise 49.2%. Approximately 23.1% of the 2014 population was estimated to be aged eighteen or younger, and 76.9% would be aged over nineteen (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Finally, the Census Bureau (2016) estimated that in 2014, 14.8% of the population would be considered to be living in poverty, with the medium household income to be $53,482. This exemplifies the salad bowl analogy often used to describe the United States because there is not a single type of American, but rather the country prides itself on a variety of individuals from diverse backgrounds (different races, ethnicities, religions, genders, education, ages, language, socioeconomic statuses, and sexual orientation) coming together to form the larger community.

Therefore, mental health professionals in this country must be well-versed in the various aspects of providing exceptional counseling to an assorted clientele. There is not a "one-size-fits-all" counseling approach, and it is imperative that professional counselors adequately prepare to assist clients from heterogeneous backgrounds. This process, commonly referred to as multicultural counseling, occurs when two or more individuals from different cultures to come together during

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the helping relationship (Torres-Rivera, Pham, Maddux, Wilbur, & Garrett, 2001). To be effective, Torres-Rivera et al. (2001) states that

> (a) a counselor must modify his or her technique to reflect the cultural differences of the client; (b) a counselor must be prepared to deal with difficulties that may arise because of the cultural differences between the client and the counselor; and (c) how a problem is conceptualized and how the problem is solved is bound in cultural patterns. (p. 28)

Multicultural counseling has gained importance as the population shifts in the country, as well as the drive for implementing evidence-based interventions for effective psychotherapy (Inman & Kreider, 2013). Consequently, researchers have empirically explored various methods for counselors to acquire multicultural competence.

Ancis and Marshall (2010) defined cultural competence (interchangeable with multicultural competence) as being aware of "one's own cultural assumptions and biases, understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse clients, and being committed to developing ways of appropriately working with diverse clients" (p. 277). With this definition in mind, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) developed standards for training those wishing to enter the mental health counseling discipline, including standards for multicultural competence. CACREP graduate programs are required to offer at least one course focused on cultural knowledge (2016). According to CACREP (2016), the curriculum must objectively address social and cultural diversity through the introduction of

a. multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally
b. theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice and advocacy
c. multicultural counseling competencies
d. the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's view of others
e. the effects of power and privilege for counselors and clients
f. help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients
g. the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients' and counselors' worldviews
h. strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination (Section II, para. 4)

Additionally, CACREP graduate programs require students to complete practicum and internship experiences under the observation of a capable supervisor, as well as participate in weekly group supervision provided by the counselor educator (2016). As a result, a combination of educational courses adhering to the social and cultural diversity CACREP standards and supervision from a multicultural competent supervisor should provide an appropriate avenue for counselors in training to develop multicultural competence. Because multicultural educational courses naturally increase cultural knowledge, this paper will focus instead on analyzing the effectiveness of supervision to promote multiculturally competent counselors.

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Multicultural Competency and Supervision Frameworks

Before assessing the effectiveness of supervision in fostering multiculturally competent counselors, it is necessary to mention the foundational models and frameworks. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) identify Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis' conceptualization as a starting point for understanding multicultural competence. In 1992, they developed a 3 by 3 dimensional model in which characteristics (therapist's self-awareness, comprehension of the client's worldview, and appropriate treatment based on culture) interact with dimensions (therapist's attitudes and beliefs, his/her knowledge, and his/her skill set; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) expanded on this to adopt a model using four interacting dimensions. One dimension, known as Intrapersonal: Identity, refers to an individual's identities (for example, gender, race, age, etc.) that influence his/her self-concept and interactions with others (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). The Interpersonal: Biases and Prejudice dimension involves an individual's expectations and biases regarding another individual based on that individual's group membership (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Interpersonal: Cultural Identity and Behavior is another dimension in Bernard and Goodyear's (2014) model in which social behaviors are determined by cultural considerations. The final dimension in the Bernard and Goodyear (2014) model is known as Social/Political, and it addresses how an individual experiences privilege or oppression based on his/her group membership. Not only is it imperative that counselors understand each dimension and their interactions with one another for multicultural competence, but it is also imperative to understand this models' influence on the supervisory relationship.

There are essentially three individuals involved in the supervision process: the client, the supervisee, and the supervisor. Using Bernard and Goodyear's (2014) Multicultural Supervision Model, each member of the supervision process has a personal identity involving gender, race, age, etc. (intrapersonal dimension). The identity of the client may influence how he/she interacts with the supervisee during a counseling session, and vice versa; likewise, the identity of the supervisee may influence how he/she interacts with the supervisor, and vice versa. If there is any kind of expectation or bias (interpersonal: biases and prejudice dimension) on the part of the client, supervisee, or supervisor, it will certainly affect the relationship with the other individuals involved in the supervisory process. Normative behaviors of each of their cultures (interpersonal: cultural identity and behavior dimension) surface and are best recognized by knowing their cultural backgrounds. And finally, identifying and working through oppression or privilege (social/political dimension) experienced by the client, supervisee, or supervisor can help during supervision. According to Bernard and Goodyear (2014), it is the responsibility of the supervisor to be self-aware with respect to each dimension and devise an appropriate method to work through any multicultural issues that may arise as a result.

Ancis and Ladnay (as cited in Ancis & Marshall, 2010) also developed a framework for understanding multicultural supervision competencies. The first of five domains, personal development, is derived from the supervisor's personal growth from exploring values, beliefs, biases,

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limitations, and current cultural knowledge, as well as the supervisee's personal growth during the supervision process (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). Conceptualization, the second domain, involves "understanding the impact of individual contextual factors on clients' lives, understanding the impact of stereotyping and oppression on clients' presenting concerns, and encouraging alternative explanations for events as they occur in a cultural context" (Ancis & Marshall, 2010, p. 278). Intervention is the third domain, and it refers to the use of culturally appropriate psychotherapy strategies (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). Process, the fourth domain, concerns the supervisory relationship as a whole and whether or not the supervisor has created a supportive climate for open communication regarding cultural issues (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). The fifth and final domain is evaluation, and it encompasses the feedback and potential recommendations for remediation to the supervisee to increase counseling competence (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). Like Bernard and Goodyear's (2014) Multicultural Supervision Model, this model also relies on the overlap and interaction of each domain.

The last model to be discussed is the Critical Events Model in which the supervisee's growth is emphasized, occurs during a series of phases, and is dependent on the supervisory working alliance (Inman & Kreider, 2013). This model suggests that the emotional bond between the supervisee and supervisor, agreed upon supervisory goals, and agreed upon supervision tasks constitutes the supervisory working alliance (Inman & Kreider, 2013). Whether it occurs during one supervision session or extends across several, the supervisee undergoes a beginning, middle, and end phase while discussing client conceptualization (Inman & Kreider, 2013). The Marker (beginning) is indicative of the supervisee seeking assistance from the supervisor (Inman & Kreider, 2013). The Task Environment (middle) involves intervention methods endorsed by the supervisor, and the resulting performance of the supervisee (Inman & Kreider, 2013). The Resolution (end) is the conclusion of the critical event, marked by the supervisee's increase in knowledge, skills, or self-awareness (Inman & Kreider, 2013). The supervisee's successful achievement of the final phase of the Critical Events Model is only possible with a strong supervisory working alliance.

Interventions

While each model previously mentioned explains multicultural supervision differently, they all emphasizes that the supervisor must be multiculturally competent so that the counselor in training can not only develop the knowledge, but also develop the skills and self-awareness imperative in becoming a multiculturally competent counselor. A supervisory relationship that best promotes a multiculturally competent supervisee is one in which the supervisee believes that the supervisor is competent, as demonstrated through modeling, conversation, and interventions implemented by the supervisor (Inman, 2006).

When Inman (2006) studied the influence of the supervisory relationship on the supervisee's multicultural competence, it was discovered that a positive relationship exists between the supervisor multicultural competence and the supervision working alliance and supervision satisfaction. This means that when the supervisor is more knowledgeable, self-aware, and skilled regarding cultural issues, the supervisory relationship improves and the more the

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supervisee rates the overall experience as a positive one. In addition, Inman (2006) found that the "supervisors' openness and attention to cultural factors and guidance on culture-specific issues have been deemed important to a culturally responsive supervisory relationship" (p. 80-81). This demonstrates the need for the supervisor to create a climate open to multicultural discussions, exploration of cultural issues, previous knowledge about a culture, and the use of interventions that are appropriate based on the client's or supervisee's culture. When all of these factors exist, the supervisee is more likely to gain the experience needed towards becoming a multiculturally competent counselor. Therefore, the supervisee's level of multicultural competence is greatly influenced by the supervisory relationship.

Ancis and Marshall (2010) found similar results when assessing the supervisory relationship. When the supervisor is open and authentic about his/her own cultural background, biases, and relevant experiences, the supervisee feels more comfortable discussing and exploring cultural issues (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). A dialogue is often the result, which increases the supervisee's self-awareness, and as previously mentioned, self-awareness is a key factor in becoming multiculturally competent (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). Moreover, Ancis and Marshall (2010) found that when the supervision relationship is unrestricted with genuine conversation regarding multicultural issues, the supervisee tends to report better outcomes with his/her diverse clients because the supervisee feels more comfortable exploring the clients' issues with a multicultural lens. In such instances, the supervisor encourages the supervisee to use the client's perspective and multicultural background during therapy, which also encourages a collaborative relationship between the supervisee and the client (Ancis & Marshall, 2010). Both Ancis' and Marshall's (2010) and Imnan's (2006) studies identify the need for the supervisor to create a climate that encourages nonjudgmental self-exploration, as well as cultural issues exploration for effective training.

To expand on this idea, Dressel, Consoli, Kim, and Atkinson (2007) studied successful and unsuccessful multicultural supervisory behaviors. The results indicate that supervisees believe that the supervisor's "openness, genuineness, empathy, warmth, and nonjudgmental stance" (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 61) helps create a safe place for supervisees to discuss cultural issues, resulting in successful multicultural learning, and mirroring effective psychotherapy. Dressel, Consoli, Kim, and Atkinson (2007) identified the need to actually address cultural issues as they arise as necessary for promoting effective multicultural supervision, and supervisors must provide a culturally diverse clientele for the supervisee to work with for the experiential aspect. When the supervisor tends to the "'feelings of discomfort experienced by trainees concerning multicultural issues,' being nondefensive while 'tolerating [supervisee's] anger, rage and fear around multicultural issues,' and by 'attending to racial/ethnic cultural differences reflected in parallel process issues'" (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007, p. 61), professional and personal growth on the part of the supervisee occurs. Thus, successful supervision behaviors include being proactive and supportive of self-exploration and

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multicultural knowledge attainment.

There are also unsuccessful behaviors during the supervision process that leads to a multiculturally incompetent counselor and dissatisfaction with the supervision experience. The biggest factor contributing to unsuccessful multicultural development is when the supervisor is unaware of his/her own cultural identity and biases (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007). Closely aligned with this lack of self-awareness are misguided intentions about multicultural issues (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007). A combination of these often results in a supervisor meaning well, but his/her actions lack sensitivity to real cultural issues, follow rigid guidelines, and lead to ineffective interventions (Dressel, Consoli, Kim, & Atkinson, 2007). For example, when a supervisor ignores the existence of specific multicultural issues, like White-privilege, and maintains that the problem does not exist, his/her supervisee will refrain from self-disclosure, feel anger or disappointment towards the supervisor, view the supervision negatively, and be unable to grow in the counseling field (Ladany, 2014). Consequently, the supervisor must have the proper multicultural self-awareness, knowledge, and skills before the supervisee can develop them through the supervision experience.

Specific Intervention Methods

In addition to the supervisor's self-awareness, knowledge, and skills; encouragement of the supervisee's increased self-awareness, knowledge, and skills; creation of a climate open to multicultural issue exploration; and promotion of a positive supervisory working alliance, other specific interventions have been proposed to increase multicultural competence in the supervision process. Experiential activities, such as interactive games, can be used in supervision (whether individual or group) to promote multicultural competence (Kim & Lyon, 2003). Kim and Lyon (2003) suggest that interactive games can assist a supervisee's self-awareness by creating a safe situation in which they can openly explore personal cultural values, confront multicultural counseling limitations, and learn from mistakes without harming a client. Interactive games can provide an enjoyable way to learn explicit information about different cultures when built into the game, thus increasing a supervisee's knowledge (Kim & Lyon, 2003). Skills pertaining to multicultural counseling can be simulated during interactive games, which also helps develop a supervisee's multicultural competence (Kim & Lyon, 2003). Particular interactive games suggested by Kim and Lyon (2003) are Bafa Bafa, Step Forward Step Backward, Multicultural Jeopardy, Cultural Bingo, How May I Help You?, and Actions Speak Louder Than Words. They describe the rules for each game and go into detail about how they support multicultural competence development in a safe environment.

There are other methods to assist a supervisee develop multicultural competence during the supervision process. Smith (2009) recommends that the supervisor and supervisee contact members of a local cultural group when discussing case conceptualizations and intervention techniques (without sharing confidential information). The wisdom provided by the community members about what could truly work for the client would ensure culturally appropriate and effective psychotherapeutic techniques. It would also naturally increase the supervisee's

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ability to work with diverse cultures, as well as gain new knowledge and skills.

Along similar lines, Alexander, Kruczek, and Ponterotto (2005) suggest cultural immersion during supervision as a way to truly promote multicultural competence. They worked with the Ministry of Education in Trinidad to support the school counselors in training in the United States, as well as the guidance officers (school counselors) at schools in Trinidad (Alexander, Kruczek, & Ponterotto, 2005). Before traveling overseas, the school counseling students had to prepare for not only the experience of interning as a school counselor, but also learn about the history and cultural norms of Trinidad so that they may provide adequate services to students in that particular country (Alexander, Kruczek, & Ponterotto, 2005). Once overseas, the counselors in training worked with their supervisor (the Trinidad guidance officers) to implement relevant guidance lessons, group counseling session, and individual counseling (Alexander, Kruczek, & Ponterotto, 2005). Cultural immersion and working with culturally different supervisors easily facilitates multicultural competence development.

Finally, it has been recommended by Ceballos, Parikh, and Post (2012) to consider social justice and advocacy efforts during supervision. Because supervision allows for both the supervisor and supervisee to develop an understanding of various cultures through direct communication with individuals from other cultures, formal education, and immersion opportunities, the supervisor and supervisee are also consequently in a position to identify social justice issues, such as the existence of prejudice or oppression. As licensed counselors or counselors-in-training, supervisors and supervisees are trained to identify when situations and policies directly or indirectly prevent equal access to certain services or opportunities by examining process, perception, and results data (Ceballos, Parikh, & Post, 2012). Additionally, clients can share their experience with prejudice or oppression during a counseling session that further distinguishes the presence of social injustice issues (Ceballos, Parikh, & Post, 2012). Ceballos, Parikh, and Post (2012) believe that when injustices are recognized, supervisors, supervisees, and the client can work together to advocate for the removal of the barriers impeding on equality. When social justice and advocacy are part of the supervision process, the quality of supervision increases, supervisees report higher levels of satisfaction with their experience, and the supervisee is exposed to novel advocacy efforts (Ceballlos, Parikh, & Post, 2012). Addressing multicultural issues further increases multicultural competence for both the supervisor and supervisee.

Anecdotal Evidence

My graduate school programs for a Master of Education in School Counseling and Educational Specialist in School Counseling were CACREP accredited, and highly emphasized the need to understand the impact of multiculturalism in counseling. It was required to complete at least three courses related to multicultural counseling, and I not only received instruction on theories related to multicultural counseling, but also participated in activities giving me hands-on experience with counseling individuals from various races and ethnicities. These programs prepared me four years ago for my first (and current) full-time school counseling position at a school on the south side of Atlanta.

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I am Caucasian female school counselor at a private high school that epitomizes the term diverse. The student population is 48% African American, 23% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 13% identified as other. Forty-eight percent of the student population is male, while the remaining 52% is female. The school was founded on the traditions of the Catholic religion, yet almost half of the student body is Protestant, Buddhist, Muslim, or has no affiliation. Finally, even though the school has a tuition requirement, approximately 45% of the student body receives some kind of financial assistance. To summarize, the students who attend this high school come from very different races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, genders, and socioeconomic statuses. I have had to bear all of this in mind when approaching each individual student's personal/social, academic, or career needs. As a result, I have become more competent in my ability to be an effective multicultural counselor. This past year I had my first supervisee, an African American female graduate student in her final semester. Even though we had very different experiences in life and in our graduate programs, we had a good rapport based on genuine, open, and nonjudgmental dispositions. This allowed us to talk about multicultural issues in a safe environment. At first, she was hesitant to talk about how culture can affect not only the student, but also the counseling experience; however, when I encouraged the conversation in a supportive manner, she became more comfortable talking about the various relevant issues. She even used the multicultural lens during her next individual counseling session that I was able to observe. I do believe that my level of multicultural competence, encouragement for self-exploration, and nonjudgmental stance that created a safe environment to explore the issues of multiculturalism helped our supervisory relationship, and helped her become a better counselor.

Conclusion

As the United States' population demographics change, the mental health field must prepare counselors to provide appropriate psychotherapeutic services to a variety of individuals. While organizations, such as CACREP, require graduate programs to follow specific standards that include multicultural curriculum that is taught in a classroom, it is imperative that counselors in training receive practical and clinical learning opportunities that expose them to multicultural issues (Vereen, Hill, & McNeal, 2008). In turn, the counselor in training will have increased self-awareness, knowledge, and skills related to multicultural competence. Multicultural supervision provides that experiential opportunity, and encourages cultural sensitivity necessary for the development of interventions most suitable for the client (Christiansen et al., 2011). When the working alliance between the supervisor and supervisee is positive, and fosters multicultural competence development, the result is improved outcomes for the client, satisfying the ultimate goal of psychotherapy.

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In the Field

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Reality Therapy in a Middle School Setting: Altering a Student's Perception

Danielle Mabeus, M.S.
Cherokee County Schools

Dr. Karen D. Rowland, Phd., NCC, LPC
Associate Professor; Coordinator for School Counseling; Chair of the Department of Counseling
Mercer University

Danielle Mabeus is a recent graduate of the Master's in School Counseling degree program at Mercer University, who now works as a school counselor in the Cherokee County School District. Any correspondence for can be sent to Danielle Mabeus at dmabeus1@gmail.com or Karen Rowland at rowland_kd@mercer.edu.

Reality Therapy: Altering a Student's Perception

Reality Therapy is a form of brief therapy that is applicable in the school setting and is derived from William Glasser's Choice Theory (Banks, 2009). The basic premise of Choice Theory is that individuals are the masters of their own choices and they alone are responsible for their choices and behaviors (Banks, 2009). Choice theory states that each person is born with five basic needs: love/belonging, fun, power/control, survival and freedom (Glasser, 1999). Individuals create a unique picture in their mind (referred to as the quality world), of what their life would look like if all of their needs were satisfied; and as life progresses, the quality world is constantly being re-created (Glasser, 1999). Individuals aim to choose to behave in ways that align with the pictures in their quality world (Glasser, 1999). Mason & Duba (2009) state that because relationships are the most important component in a person's quality world, the counselor must exhibit the qualities of a person the student would want in his/her quality world. The therapeutic relationship is the foundation for positive counseling results and a vital part of Reality Therapy (Mason & Duba, 2009). The school counselor should make the student feel comfortable by using appropriate attending skills and creating a nonjudgmental environment (Banks, 2009). Additional useful tools for establishing an effective counseling relationship in Reality Therapy include using humor, creating a supportive atmosphere and using self-disclosure when appropriate (Banks, 2009).

Reality Therapy can be especially useful in the middle school setting due to the unique development that exists during adolescence. Adolescence marks a time period of the second largest significant change in brain development for humans (Roaten & Roaten, 2012). This means that professional school counselors working with adolescents have an obligation to acknowledge the variances in developmental levels between students

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and design interventions based on the individual needs of each student (Akos, 2005). Responsive services, such as individual counseling, are an effective way to target and work with individual students to address specific needs (Mason & Duba, 2009). According to Roaten and Roaten (2012) Reality Therapy has been identified as an approach that works at school with adolescents.

Case Study

Rebecca is a thirteen year old, eighth grade student who is new to the school. Rebecca comes to counseling at her mother's request and expresses her inability to make friends and form new relationships. She states that this has never been an issue with her in the past, and that she had many friends at her other school. She thinks that her lack of friendships is starting to affect her happiness and her grades are slowly declining as a result. Rebecca has always been an A/B student and now has a C in two of her classes. As a result of her grades dropping, her mother has contacted the school counseling office and requested the counselor speak to Rebecca.

Integrating Reality Therapy with Rebeccas

Reality Therapy would be an effective approach for Rebecca because she is struggling to form relationships, and this is causing her happiness and grades to falter. According to Kiefer, Alley and Ellerbrock (2015), peer interactions play a pivotal role in an adolescent's academic motivation. Additionally, Glasser (1988) points out that a student is unable to learn if the academics being taught are not satisfying the needs of which the student is most concerned. Rebecca's social and quality world were not aligned due to the lack of peer interaction, leaving a void of the most important basic need, love/belonging. Rebecca needed to find ways to fulfill the need of love/belonging in order for her to be academically motivated. The counselor first welcomed Rebecca into the counseling office and discussed briefly with her what a day at school looked and felt like to her. The counselor made sure to make Rebecca feel as comfortable as possible and reassured her that the information that is shared is confidential unless she discloses that she wants to harm herself or someone else or someone is harming her. Making Rebecca feel like she was in a safe space was important because her mother sought counseling for her. At the middle school level, students are beginning to make choices on their own, (Akos, 2005) independent of the choices that their parents made for them, which created the possibility that counseling could be met with resistance in this case. Building trust through avoiding judgement, listening, use of self-disclosure when necessary, and use of attending skills (Mason & Duba, 2009) was pivotal in Rebecca's case.

The WDEP model is a tool that utilizes the principles of Reality Therapy (Mason & Duba, 2009). Each letter represents an area of promoting change in the client: W= want, D= doing/direction, E= evaluation of self, and P= planning (Mason & Duba, 2009). Using the WDEP model was a viable technique for Rebecca because the model gave her the opportunity to explore her wants and needs and assess what her level of commitment was at the time so she could obtain what she wanted. After developing a trusting counselor/client relationship with Rebecca, the counselor explored with Rebecca what it was that she wanted. The counselor encouraged Rebecca to be as specific as possible in her wants so she could focus on one goal

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at a time and not become overwhelmed. Distress is a common emotion for a large number of middle school students (Walter, Lambie & Ngazimbi, 2008) so counseling at a pace in which Rebecca feels comfortable is important to avoid causing any unnecessary negative feelings. After finding out what Rebecca wanted, the counselor proceeded to assess what Rebecca's level of commitment was in order for her to get what she wanted. According to Banks (2009), there are five levels of commitment: no commitment at all, a general wish, middle level of commitment, higher level of commitment, and the highest level of commitment. Assessing Rebecca's level of commitment before proceeding on to the next stage of the WDEP model was necessary in order for the counselor to know how hard she was willing to work to reach her goals. If Rebecca had presented herself at a lower level of commitment (middle level or below) the counselor would want to make sure Rebecca knew that she was in control of her own life and actions before proceeding. It was important that Rebecca change her perception before moving on in the model so she was able to see that she was solely responsible for her choices. This change in perception fueled Rebecca's commitment level allowing her to move forward in the counseling process.

Following the WDEP model, Rebecca then needed to identify what direction she wanted to go in with her life. The counselor prompted Rebecca to find out if Rebecca would be happy with her life if she continued in the same direction she was currently heading. This prompt allowed Rebecca to visualize a future that would exist if she continued to make the same choices that were causing her to be unhappy in the present. Exploring what she was currently doing allowed Rebecca to focus on her current behaviors and take ownership of her actions. Rebecca needed to identify how she interacted with peers in the present so she could see that her current interactions, or lack of interactions, were not satisfying her need of love/belonging. The counselor introduced a worksheet about choices which gave Rebecca some time to reflect on the many choices she was making throughout the day both in and out of school. This worksheet served as a visual for Rebecca to see her choices listed out and for her to realize how many choices she made in the day and how she was solely responsible for those choices. After Rebecca identified her actions and behaviors the counselor moved Rebecca on to the evaluation stage of the WDEP model.

The evaluation stage was vital in getting Rebecca to change her thoughts and actions. In this stage the counselor helped Rebecca to realize that the choices she was making were not getting her what she wanted. If Rebecca could effectively evaluate her behaviors and see that they were keeping her stagnant, then change was likely to occur. In the evaluation stage, the counselor revisited the behaviors that Rebecca had mentioned in the "doing" stage. The counselor identified the behaviors one by one and asked Rebecca if she thought the behaviors were helping or hurting her. During this stage, it was important to not allow Rebecca to make excuses for her actions. She needed to take full responsibility for her actions so when she identified a behavior as negative she understood that she was responsible for the choices that were hurting her and hindering her from making friends.

The final stage of counseling Rebecca

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using the WDEP model involved making a plan. The counselor was there to guide Rebecca through making her plan but the decisions were ultimately up to Rebecca. This empowered Rebecca to take control of her own life and guided her in the direction that she thought would be most beneficial to her goal. The counselor made sure that Rebecca's goal was attainable and could be reached in a short amount of time. In addition, the counselor wanted Rebecca to compose a plan that was firm and consistent. The counselor encouraged Rebecca to start small with her plan because it involved social interaction. The counselor followed up with Rebecca in a week to see if she had followed through with her plan. The counselor noticed that Rebecca was unable to follow through with her plan, so they revisited the evaluation stage because more than likely her self-evaluation was weak in the first session. After re-evaluation the counselor asked Rebecca to form a short-term plan that she could experiment with in the next few days. This pushed Rebecca to try the plan immediately and allowed her to assess if the plan was working for her. The counselor met with Rebecca for a follow-up after a few days to check if she had followed through with the short-term plan. The counselor noticed that Rebecca changed her behaviors and reached out to her peers. This ultimately gave Rebecca the opportunity to form new relationships and satisfy her basic need of love and belonging. The counselor continued to monitor Rebecca's grades and hoped they would improve as her social life advanced.

Conclusion

Reality therapy is an effective form of therapy for middle school counselors to use because it gives students the opportunity to take control of their own choices and behaviors which empowers students in the process (Banks, 2009). The WDEP model serves as a tool to break down choices and pushes students to alter their individual perceptions (Banks, 2009). Students are able to see that their current behaviors and actions are not getting them what they want, and they learn to take responsibility for their individual actions (Banks, 2009). Additionally, students evaluate whether or not their actions are helping them to reach a specific goal (Banks, 2009). Ultimately, students form their own immediate plan so they can see positive results quickly (Banks, 2009). This motivates the students to continue to make choices that will allow them to continue to succeed and take personal responsibility for future behaviors.

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Using Solution-Focused Brief Counseling in the Elementary School: A Case Study

Tonia Gatlin and Necole Bryant

Tonia Gatlin is a school counselor in the Cobb County School District and Necole Bryant is a school counselor supervisor in Fulton County School District and also a PhD Candidate at Mercer University in the Ph.D. in Counselor Education & Supervision. Any correspondence for can be sent to Tonia Gatlin at trgatlin15@yahoo.com or Necole Bryant at BryantYoung@fultonschools.org.

Introduction

This paper will reflect my views on using a solution-focused approach at the elementary school level. Sklare (2014) reported that solution-focused approach emphasizes problem solving and highlights the strengths and positives of students. A solution-focused approach is also recognized for creating solutions for clients or students in a limited amount of time (Sklare, 2014). In an elementary school setting where the ratio of students to a school counselor, in a typical Georgia school, maybe 500:1, this approach may be best utilized in order to provide individual counseling with a large student population. I have found this approach to be efficient and effective for elementary school students because students will focus on the solutions to their problems, which lead to changes in their lives. As well, students will hear comments that are positive and receive recognition for their strengths and past and present successes. Kim and Franklin (2015) reported solution focused brief therapy (SFBT) focuses on the client recognizing past success and identifying new responses to problem solving. Thus, the solution-focused approach would be very helpful in building self-esteem in impressionable elementary age students. As Sklare (2014) stated, the solution-focused approach helps students to recognize what they can do (focusing on the positive) and eliminates the concept of what they need to stop doing (deter the negative). Some key components of the solution-focused approach that I think are very beneficial to elementary school students are goal setting, the miracle question, scaling, cheerleading, and the message. This paper will examine how each of these components were used in a case study of a fifth grade student.

Case Study

Student's Background

Tabitha (pseudonym) is a 10-year-old fifth grade student. She has one sister who is in the first grade at the same school. Tabitha and her sister are currently living with their aunt. Tabitha's mother is currently incarcerated for a long period of time. Tabitha does not know her father or his whereabouts. On many days, Tabitha comes to school looking disheveled. Her clothes are dirty or stained. Her hair is not combed, and it is matted and tangled.

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There have been several days as well when she has come to school hungry.

Tabitha is considered to be a C student. On a scale of 100, her reading assessments average is approximately 74, and her math assessment average is approximately 67. She has some difficulty with vocabulary and reading comprehension. She struggles with multi-step problems and computation in math. She lacks focus in class, and she is easily distracted. On last year's CRCT examination, she did not pass Reading, Math, and Social Studies. When Tabitha is focused in class, she works hard in completing her assignments with accuracy. When she doesn't understand a skill or concept, she is willing to ask for help without hesitation. Tabitha is anxious to help other students in class when she has mastered a skill. Her favorite subjects are Spanish and Art. She excels in those classes.

Tabitha's social skills need improvement. She struggles with having friends. She is teased often because of her appearance. She is not easily accepted into groups; therefore, she becomes involved in confrontations with other students. There have been times where Tabitha has been destructive with items in her desk or in the class because she is angry or frustrated about something. On rare occasions, Tabitha has been disrespectful to her teachers by not following directions, making inappropriate statements, and arguing back with teachers. Tabitha is currently in the SST (student support team) process for academic and behavioral problems.

Student's Identified Problems

Tabitha's home life is affecting her academics, behavior, and social skills. She is angry that her mom is incarcerated and that she has to live with her aunt. She is embarrassed when she comes to school with dirty or torn clothes. Her self-esteem has also been affected. She does not view herself as pretty or popular with the other students. She is often loud and confrontational with students and teachers. Her grades are borderline failing grades because she is not able to concentrate in class. She often thinks that the other students are talking negatively about her, thus her focus is on what the students are saying. She is often alienated from groups because of the constant bickering. Also, students have often complained that Tabitha has stolen something from them. As a result of these actions, Tabitha chooses to work independently and isolate herself from the class. She feels sad because she thinks no one wants her, not her aunt or her classmates.

Solution-focused Brief Counseling Techniques

According to Rakauskiene and Dumciene (2013), SFBT is an effective counseling technique to use with adolescents who are dealing with psychosocial issues. Therefore, one might surmise Tabitha's feelings of anger, sadness, and her declining grades can be helped with the solution-focused brief counseling techniques and strategies. Tabitha will greatly benefit from the positive approach of this type of counseling. She will learn that she can achieve her goals and change her behavior with small changes. One reason why I like this approach is because any small change is viewed as a positive step in the right direction for future changes. Tabitha needs to hear positive comments and boost her self-esteem. This approach will help her to see that she is capable of making good

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decisions, and that she has many strengths and positive attributes. In order to help Tabitha, solutions will be developed for her academic and behavioral issues. One immediate solution to one of her problems is providing her with new school uniform clothes. I will ask the parent center at our school to donate a few new uniforms for Tabitha to wear. This will diminish the amount of teasing that she has been experiencing.

The first step is for Tabitha to establish a goal or goals for herself. In my previous experience with Tabitha, she has stated to me that she wants to improve her grades and be able to control her temper. As the counselor, I will encourage Tabitha to believe in her ability to achieve her goals. I will inform her that small, positive changes can help her accomplish those goals and lead to successes in school. She could possibly have goals of taking notes in class, completing her homework every night, and writing in a journal about her feelings instead of bickering with other students when she becomes upset.

After engaging in goal setting with Tabitha, I will ask her a miracle question. The miracle question is a technique designed to shift the client's focus away from troubling situations to a problem free future (Weatherall & Gibson, 2015). In this case, the miracle question will give Tabitha the opportunity to think about her life without any problems. For example, I would ask her to imagine if she had a magic wand, and she could wave this magic wand to change anything in her life; what would you change in your life? This strategy is powerful because the responses from the student will give the counselor insight as to what the student truly wants to change in her life. Tabitha would begin to visualize what her school life would be like if she took the steps to achieve her goals. This strategy helps the student to focus on her goals and transform her miracle into reality.

One of the most commonly used techniques in SFBT is scaling (King, 2013). As the counselor, I will use scaling questions to help Tabitha rate her current school situation and to establish a baseline to measure her progress toward achieving her goals. I would ask Tabitha the following: "on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the worse and 10 being your miracle, how would you rate your satisfaction with school?" Any rating above a zero will let me know that there are some good or positive moments for Tabitha at school. I like the scaling technique because it also gives the student a chance to see that the situation is not as bad as he or she has thought. The scaling technique also gives the student an opportunity to move up the scale in a positive direction; therefore, enabling the student with the power to change.

I believe the technique of cheerleading will have a profound effect on students with low self-esteem. Cheerleading is described as offering praise to support and encourage a client's success (Sklare, 2014). Because Tabitha does not recognize her own strengths and successes and focuses on what she is doing wrong, I will highlight Tabitha's strengths and successes through cheerleading. For example, I will give her praise for helping another student in class, completing her homework, and remaining calm and not bickering with other students. I would also praise her for doing well in Spanish and Art class. The words of praise and encouragement will influence Tabitha to continue demonstrating positive behaviors. Cheerleading is definitely an

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appropriate technique to use with Tabitha because she needs to hear kind words and to know that she is doing something right. Many times, she is hearing what she is doing wrong or hearing negative words from other students. Cheerleading will make Tabitha aware of her good deeds, strengths, and successes.

The technique of writing a message to a student at the conclusion of a counseling session is another powerful tool for counselors to use (Sklare, 2014). The message provides compliments to the student on his or her efforts, achievements, and past successes. I like the use of the message because it allows the counselor to give something tangible to the student that is positive. The message also reaffirms to the student that the counselor is genuinely concerned, attentive, and caring for the needs of the student. In the case with Tabitha, I would first read my entire message to her, and then I would provide to her a shorter version of my original message so she could share it with her family and teachers. Tabitha wants to prove to everyone that she can do better in school, so the message gives her an opportunity showcase her strengths and successes. An example of a message that would write to Tabitha is: "I am really impressed with your commitment to staying focused in class and how you want to control your temper with others. You recognize that controlling your temper is an important step in making friends and getting along with other people. You realize that changing your attitude can lead to positive results. You also realize that taking notes in class will help you understand the subject material more and help you study at home. I am happy to hear that you are committed to completing your homework every night. You realize that doing your homework is practice for the skills that you have learned in class and that this can help you improve your grades. I would suggest that you continue to stay focused in class and even participate in class discussions. Just by asking me for help, you are already on the path to accomplishing your goals."

Conclusion

Students come to school with a plethora of issues that can interfere with their ability to be focused in school due in part to the unique challenges posed by educational and socialization expectations, and physical and psychological developmental changes (Patel, Aronson & Divan, 2013). As a result, school counselors are confronted with an increased number of students with problems. The solution-focused brief counseling approach allows for counselors to help more students in a limited amount of time. In addition, SFBT has been reported to be a promising early intervention treatment for emotional, behavioral, and academic problems in schools (Franklin, 2015). I like this approach because it provides quick solutions to the student's problem, which means the student, can concentrate more on learning and not his or her problem. The strength of this approach is that it emphasizes the student's strengths and successes. I believe that this approach teaches students to be focused on solutions and not focused on problems. This approach compliments my personal beliefs of focusing on the positives in any situation. It is very easy to point out the negatives, but it is better to concentrate on the positives. Students, especially elementary age students, need reassurance about the things that they are doing right. By focusing on the strengths and successes of students, this approach gives them a new perspective on how to

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deal with problems. All in all, I believe the solution-focused approach gives students hope that they are capable of achieving their goals.

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Increasing Adolescent Self-Esteem: Group Strategies to Address Wellness and Process

Bethany Mills, B.A., M.C.
114 Keystone Terrace , West, Lethbridge, AB
Email: bethany.glaister@uleth.ca
Phone: (403) 394-6026

Dawn Lorraine McBride, Ph.D.
Associate Professor at the University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive, Lethbridge, AB
Email: dawn.mcbride@uleth.ca
Phone: (403) 317-2877

Abstract

The authors present a therapeutic resource for school counselors who need a tangible method to integrate self-esteem strategies into their psychoeducational group programs. The focus of the group is a comprehensive wellness model based on five senses of self and how each self must be addressed to promote healthy life decisions. Special attention is devoted to providing self-esteem information that relies less on teaching concepts and more on integrating process work into the group.

Keywords: adolescents, psychoeducational group, process, self-esteem, wellness

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Increasing Adolescent Self-Esteem: Group Strategies to Address Wellness and Process

Self-esteem has been extensively studied in the behavioural and social sciences (Robins, Trzesniewski, & Donnellan, 2012). In addition, adolescent self-esteem has been a major focus in research over the past 30 years (Searcy, 2007). It is a crucial topic on which to focus, as low self-esteem has been shown to have a negative influence on many adolescent life decisions that may continue to affect the course of their lives (Searcy, 2007; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). Furthermore, Haney and Durlak (1998) highlighted research that showcased how low levels of self-esteem are associated with alcohol and drug abuse, higher rates of teen pregnancy, suicide, loneliness, juvenile delinquency, social anxiety, and alienation. This article contains information that supports the use of processed-based psychoeducational groups (PEG) and a summary of a 10-week program for a wellness- and processed-based PEG that may increase adolescent self-esteem.

Utilizing Group Approaches in a School Setting

According to Paisley and Milsom (2006), PEGs are commonly used with adolescents in a school setting to impart new information and promote the refinement or development of new skills. The focus in PEGs is to develop members' cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills through the presentation and discussion of factual information (Brown, 2011; Corey, Corey,

& Corey, 2010; Furr, 2000). In addition, PEGs are often preventative in nature and are used to teach members coping skills applicable to the topics being covered in the specific group (Brown, 2011; Furr, 2000).

In working with adolescent self-esteem, a PEG appears to be a valid approach as these groups (a) mesh with many adolescents' experiences in an educational setting (Corey et al., 2010); (b) offer a developmentally appropriate venue through which to impart and discuss information on a selected topic (Akos, Hamm, Mack, & Dunaway, 2006; Corey et al., 2010), in this case self-esteem; (c) have been found to be particularly effective in school settings (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Brown, 2011; Corey et al., 2010; Paisley & Milsom, 2006); and (d) often focus on teaching coping skills (Brown, 2011; Furr, 2000), such as how to handle assaults to one's self-esteem. While these characteristics provide support for using a PEG format for adolescents with low self-esteem, PEGs can be very structured in nature (Corey et al., 2010), which is not usually conducive to the creation of an environment in which meaningful process work can occur (Champe & Rubel, 2012). However, according to some of the literature pertaining to PEGs, these groups should involve a balance of process and content (Champe & Rubel, 2012; Corey et al., 2010; Furr, 2000). Champe and Rubel (2012) stated that, despite the important role that an integration of process can play in members' acquisition of knowledge on the topics covered in PEGs, hardly any literature focuses on how to integrate process into PEGs.

The powerful therapeutic effects of process work cannot be overstated. In Fertman and Chubb's (1992) study of a PEG aimed at increasing self-esteem, no reference to process was made in the group's description, and this PEG was not found to increase adolescent self-esteem. To provide further support for the power of process in a group setting, Lee and Harvey (2014) found that participants receiving cognitive behavioural therapy recalled more therapy points than those in the PEG without a process base. As such, counselors working in a school setting can work to maximize students' learning through focusing on integrating process into their group practice.

The Indivisible Self Model of Wellness

Wellness models have long been used as tools to assess individual functioning (Myers & Sweeney, 2007) and as theories to explain health and illness (Myers & Sweeney, 2008). While the roots of counselling have been traced back almost 100 years, the roots of wellness models go back almost two millennia (Myers & Sweeney, 2008). According to Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000):

> [Wellness is] a way of life orientated toward optimal health and well-being, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community. Ideally, it is the optimum state of health and well-being that each individual is capable of achieving. (p. 252)

Theorists have proposed myriad different wellness models, but only two are grounded in counseling theory (Myers, Willse, & Villalba, 2011). The first is the "Wheel of Wellness" (Sweeney & Witmer, 1991, p. 528; see also Myers et al., 2011, p. 28), which was used to inform Myers and Sweeney's (2005b) second model,

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the indivisible self model of wellness. In the creation of the wheel of wellness, Sweeney and Witmer (1991) identified characteristics correlated with longevity, a high quality of life, and healthy living (see also Myers & Sweeney, 2004). Myers and Sweeney (2004) then organized these characteristics according to Adler's major life tasks of work, friendship, love, self, and spirit. In their stringent testing of the wheel of wellness model, Myers and Sweeney (2005a) found that it fell short; thus, they made changes and created the indivisible self model of wellness.

Myers and Sweeney's (2005b) wellness model contains the original 17 dimensions of Sweeney and Witmer's (1991) wheel of wellness, but they are grouped differently to reflect one, higher-order factor–the indivisible self–and five, second-order factors– the coping self, social self, creative, self, essential self, and physical self (Myers et al., 2011). The identification of five second-order factors allowed for the exploration of the many variables that interact and contribute to an individual's overall wellness–the indivisible self (Myers et al., 2011).

The Indivisible Self as an Evidence-Based Model

Myers and Sweeney (2008) asserted counselors have an ethical responsibility to utilize evidence-based techniques. Consequently, Myers et al. (2011) examined the extent to which wellness factors were predictive of self-esteem in 225 adolescents (spanning 15- to 17-years-of-age). They found the coping self, social self, and creative self, which are three of the five wellness factors identified in Myers and Sweeney's (2005b) indivisible self model of wellness, had the greatest impact on increasing self-esteem in this population of adolescents.

Villalba and Myers (2008) tested a three-session classroom guidance unit based upon the indivisible self model of wellness on 55 Grade 5 students. The majority of the participants in their study had significantly higher wellness scores post testing. While the main aim of the group therapy program is to increase self-esteem by utilizing Myers and Sweeney's (2005b) indivisible self model of wellness as a framework, it also has the potential to increase the wellness of participants as a whole.

Although Myers and Sweeney's (2005b) indivisible self model of wellness is relatively new, preliminary findings support the efficacy of this tool as the basis for effective counseling interventions. Moreover, Sweeney and Witmer's (1991) wheel of wellness, upon which the model is based, has been employed since 1991 and has been empirically supported using a wide range of populations and presenting issues (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005; Myers & Sweeney, 2004).

Overview of the Group Therapy Program

The eight main group-counseling sessions are based on the five second-order factors identified in the indivisible self model of wellness. A more in-depth examination of the rationale and support for each lesson's objectives, activities, and process instructions as well as detailed session instructions and information about activities can be found in Mills (2015) work. Each of the following sections contains an outline of the focus and activities for a particular session. In addition, each section describes the processing tools that help the adolescents reflect on what is being

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accomplished by them in the group.

Session 1: Pregroup Activities

In this session, the main objective is to orient members to the group process. This objective is accomplished by reviewing the group rules, inviting members to help personalize these group rules, and going over group-related concerns members may have. Focusing on here-and-now interactions is included in the group rules as a way to introduce members to a here-and-now focus and to group process. Members also complete the School Short-Form Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI; Coopersmith, as cited in Hills, Francis, & Jennings, 2011), which includes 25 items and takes approximately ten minutes to complete.

During this initial session, facilitators can scan the room (Middleman, 1978) to get a sense of members' levels of comfort (e.g., looking at the nonverbal communications that members are expressing through observing their body language) and the underlying group dynamics that are emerging. They can note their initial observations of the members' nonverbal communications so these may brought up for discussion during the middle or end stage of the group to highlight members' progress over time.

Session 2: Essential Self–Spirituality, Gender Identity, Cultural Identity, and Self-Care

In this session, the objectives are to create a safe environment within the group and to help members get to know one another. Additional objectives are to address and explore the diverse backgrounds and identities the members bring into the group setting. The method used is to have each member explore his or her essential self through the creation of a personal poster. The label in each quadrant is one of the elements of the essential self. A member writes four words in each quadrant and then uses any of the supplied art materials to explain what the words represent or mean to him or her. Each member then shares the poster with another member. Once this discussion ends, the facilitator takes time with the members to process the activity.

Process commentary revolves around exploring what it is like for members to know that there are similarities between members' experiences, regardless of the different meanings they attach to culture, gender, spirituality, and self-care. It also focuses on exploring differences (e.g., What was it like for you to know that there are differences between members? Is being different than others okay?).

Session 3: Social Self I–Friendship and Love

In this session, group members explore their understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship and the link between healthy relationships and high self-esteem. Group members write down two words they think are important characteristics to have in relationships with others and then share their words with a partner. The partners are to discuss how healthy relationships may help to increase self-esteem. These characteristics and possible connections are then discussed as a group.

The members also begin to create their own Indivisible You Toolbox that will be used throughout the program. Members will add the new tools they learn to their toolbox, such as new coping skills, self-esteem building statements, member-identified strengths, community resources,

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and insights gained.

To assist members in processing the activity, the facilitators ask, What was one feeling or thought that occurred for you when you completed this activity? This is followed with a round-robin check in which the facilitators ask each member, What is one word that describes how you are feeling right now? During this part of the session, facilitators can be looking for opportunities to amplify subtle messages conveyed by the verbal or nonverbal communication of members (Middleman, 1978) that relate to the group topics being discussed (Champe & Rubel, 2012). Process commentary centers on discussing, as a group, the subtle messages that the facilitators choose to bring to the group's attention and how these interactions relate to the topic being discussed.

Session 4: Creative Self I–Thinking, Emotions, Control, and Positive Humour

In session three, the main objectives are to highlight and explore the connections between situations that may impact group members' self-esteem and their subsequent beliefs, feelings, and behaviours. Group members discuss different situations that could have the potential to affect adolescent self-esteem (e.g., a relationship break up). The focus is on examining the connections between individuals' beliefs about themselves after these types of situations and their resulting feelings and behaviours. The facilitator assists members to replace any negative beliefs about themselves with positive, alternative beliefs. The members write self-affirming statements based on these alternative beliefs and place these in their toolboxes.

Useful questions to help members with processing their experiences are, What is one word to describe how you felt when thinking about a negative belief about yourself? What is one word to describe how you felt when thinking about an alternative positive belief about yourself? Facilitators can be scanning the room searching for information and feeling links (Middleman, 1978) to be discussed with the group in order to help explore members' relationships to the topics being covered (Champe & Rubel, 2012). Process commentary is aimed at using here-and-now group interactions in a way that works to normalize the experience of low self-esteem.

Session 5: Coping Self I–Stress Management, Leisure, Self-Worth, and Realistic Beliefs

In this session, members explore Fox and Sokol's (2011) give-up and go-to thoughts as way to develop an understanding of realistic beliefs. After learning about give-up and go-to thoughts, members, working in pairs, pick two scenarios out of a hat. Based on these two scenarios, they generate two give-up thoughts and two go-to thoughts. When the activity is complete, members share their experiences in this activity with the whole group. Near the end of this session, they think of recent situations where they had give-up thoughts and write down two, alternative, go-to thoughts. These go-to thoughts become new tools in their Indivisible You Toolboxes. The purposes of the process questions in this session are to help identify and work through any resistance in this stage of the group, create a safe group environment (Champe & Rubel, 2012), and encourage members to directly address each other using "I" statements (Middleman, 1978). In the group, the facilitators ask the

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members to recall when they were asked to brainstorm give-up thoughts and go-to thoughts and to take time to think about any sensations that occurred in their bodies then. The purpose of this is to integrate the use of silence into the session and to help members start to become more aware of the signals that their body may send them. Facilitators also help the members become more comfortable with silences by helping them explore the answers to the questions, What was is it like to sit in silence with others in the group? Did you find it easier to sit in silence with some members over others?

Session 6: Physical Self–Exercise and Nutrition

The foci in this session are on providing members with information on the benefits of eating healthy foods and exercising regularly and highlighting how these benefits relate to increased levels of self-esteem. This is done by providing handouts on healthy eating and facilitating an interactive group discussion on different types of exercise and ways to make exercising regularly enjoyable. In addition, the discussion includes how eating healthily and exercising regularly both help to increase self-esteem. Goal setting is part of this session as each member identifies and records two goals related to the foci of the session that he or she would like to work towards. These two goals become yet another tool in his or her Indivisible You Toolbox.

Key processing questions are, What is one word that describes how you felt completing today's group discussion on exercise? What is one word that describes how you feel when you think about changing the way you exercise or eat?

Session 7: Coping Self II–Stress Management, Leisure, Self-Worth, and Realistic Beliefs

This session returns to a consideration of the coping self. While the focus in session four was realistic beliefs, in this session the main objective is to explore members' self-doubts and to help them start thinking about how they can challenge this lack of self-confidence. After contemplating what their self-doubts are, members then use the available art supplies to illustrate their self-doubts. They are given the opportunity to share and discuss what their self-doubts look like with the whole group. Then, working in pairs, they brainstorm ideas on the different ways that they can work to fight off their self-doubts when they emerge. These ideas, and any others the members develop before the next session, will be the main topics of discussion in the following week's session. The members' hobbies and how they may be used to lessen thoughts of self-doubt are also highlighted in this session. Again, a written description of how each member will fight off self-doubt becomes a new tool in his or her Indivisible You Toolbox.

In the group discussion, members state two words that represent their experiences while thinking about and drawing their self-doubts. This is followed with a check in round where members describe the feeling that best represents how they felt when thinking about ways to fight off their self-doubt. The main foci of process commentary during this stage in the group are to normalize members' experiences of self-doubt and to ensure that all members feel safe. As such, facilitators focus on reaching for feeling and information links related to self-doubt as well as redirecting and toning down strong messages through the use of "I" versus "you" statements (Middleman, 1978).

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Session 8: Social Self II–Friendship and Love

This session incorporates the processing of the self-doubt activity from the previous week, a group discussion on the different strategies to fight off members' self-doubts, and how to build a confidence mindset (Fox & Sokol, 2011). There is also an interactive group discussion of what healthy social support entails, and the members receive a handout outlining the various local support resources available for adolescents. The ideas and resources provided in this session become additional tools in the members' Indivisible You Toolboxes.

In the group discussion, members name two words that represent their experiences in thinking about building a confidence mindset. In the following check in round, they state the feeling that best represents how they feel when they think about their social support network. Facilitators can be scanning the room looking for opportunities to amplify subtle messages (Middleman, 1978) in the form of a group discussion that relates to the type of body language that may occur when someone demonstrates confidence (i.e., that they are good enough, do have talents, etc.).

Session 9: Creative Self II–Thinking, Emotions, Control, and Positive Humour

As this is the final official group session, the main objectives are to explore members' learning in the group and to provide emotional closure to the experience. Two activities help accomplish these goals. First, members have the opportunity to complete an individual, art-based exercise, adapted from Fox and Sokol's (2011) Positive Picture of You activity. They draw words or images that represent their strengths in relation to academics, friendships, physical abilities, personality, physical attributes, and so forth. If needed, group facilitators can provide members with examples of the different strengths that could fall under each of the categories covered.

The second activity is geared towards providing members with emotional closure and is adapted from Townsend and Manieri's (2014) Positive Picnic Closure activity. In this activity each member writes his or her name in the middle of a paper plate. He or she then selects a coloured marker. Members pass their plates to the right and have 40 seconds to write one thing that they really liked, admired, or learned from the person to whom the plate belongs. Messages written are to be positive and supportive. This process continues until everyone gets his or her plate back. The remainder of the group time is spent processing this activity. At the end of the session, members can add their plates to their Indivisible You Toolboxes. The facilitators provide everyone with information about the postgroup session and explain that they will be adding a strength and one hope or wish they have for each member into each of their toolboxes.

During the processing portion of this session, facilitators ask the group members to think back to the first day of group and what they were thinking and feeling at that time. Then, they ask the members to take time to think about what they are thinking and feeling on this last day of group. The key question is, If you could only pick one or two words to describe the difference between what your experience was like on the first day of group and what your experience is right now, what would

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the word (or words) be? Facilitators look for opportunities to highlight members' progress and the success of the group as a whole. Again, looking for feeling and information links that relate to self-esteem helps to accomplish these goals (Middleman, 1978).

Session 10: Postgroup Individual Sessions

In these individual sessions, the main objective is to complete the CSEI (Coopersmith, as cited in Hills et al., 2011) to track any changes in members' self-esteem at the end of the group experience. Another objective is to provide members with an opportunity to provide feedback on the group by completing a group evaluation form. These sessions will be completed privately with each member to enable facilitators to determine if referrals need to be made for individual counseling or other local resources. At the end of each of these individual sessions, members are given their Indivisible You Toolboxes to take with them from the group.

The primary processing question is, If you could pick two accomplishments that you are the proudest of during your time in this group what would they be? Facilitators can use members' answers to this question for more in-depth discussion and to celebrate the growth members have experienced throughout the group's duration.

Conclusion

The group therapy program previously summarized provides a straightforward and tangible way for school counselors to work towards increasing self-esteem in adolescents. This group therapy program also outlines one method through which a model of wellness can be integrated into such a program. As adolescents are the future of this world, working to promote and support the development of healthy adolescents through assisting them in increasing their self-esteem is a very important undertaking.

This article highlights the value of having an in-depth understanding of process work and how to actually integrate process into PEGs, which are commonly utilized in a school setting. However, the process instructions contained in this group therapy program (Mills, 2015) are based on suggestions from experts in the field of group counselling, the utility of these directions working with adolescents in this program has not yet been tested.

Overall, this wellness-based PEG provides a unique, strengths-based approach that school counselors can utilize to promote higher levels of self-esteem in students by integrating an empirically tested model of wellness based on identity factors into their group programs. School counselors can also promote a deeper understanding of identity and the effects that wellness choices can have on one's sense of self. Moreover, this group therapy program can be a valuable resource for school counselors who want a tangible method through which to integrate process work into their PEGs and, thus, work to increase knowledge acquisition by their students of the topic (or topics) being covered (Champe & Rubel, 2012).

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Personal Theory of Brief Counseling in a High School Setting

Monique M. Santana
Mercer University

Dr. Karen D. Rowland, Phd., NCC, LPC
Associate Professor; Coordinator for School Counseling; Chair of the Department of Counseling
Mercer University

Monique Santana is a Mercer University School Counseling student who is completing her internship in a Gwinnett County high school. Any questions regarding this publication can be sent to Monique.Santana@live.mercer.edu or to Karen Rowland at rowland_kd@mercer.edu.

Personal Theory of Brief Counseling in the High School Setting

High school counselors face time constraints due to the ample number of tasks and duties for which they are responsible in their positions. They are not only required to provide direct services to students pertaining to career readiness, academics, and personal/social wellbeing, but they are also responsible for providing indirect services such as assessing school-wide needs, communicating with parents, disaggregating and disseminating data, and many more. Because school counselors are limited in the time they have to accomplish all the tasks for which they are accountable, they must find ways to provide direct individual services to students effectively and efficiently. For this reason, high school counselors should have a brief theory of counseling and subsequent techniques to utilize in a school setting. My personal theory of brief counseling is reminiscent of William Glasser's choice theory integrated with my own personal understanding of effective counseling with adolescents and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The theory is structured by five basic beliefs which address the wellness and prevention aspects of school counseling.

Five Basic Beliefs and Goals

The basic beliefs of my personal theory of brief counseling consist of the following:

1. The only person over whom an individual has control is him or herself.
2. There are situations over which we do not have control.
3. Past events influence an individual's growth and development but the individual has the capacity to move forward and not allow the past detain them.
4. We are driven by seven basic needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization (Corey, 2014).
5. Needs may or may not be met but individuals can strive to meet them or have them met.

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The goals of this theory are to:

1. Empower all students to reach their highest personal level of wellness and success in the career, academic, and personal/social domains.
2. Prevent or change behaviors in students that will inhibit growth and development in the career, academic, and personal/social domains.

The only person over which an individual has control is him or herself

This basic belief is empowering. True understanding of this statement allows the individual to feel they are capable of changing their behaviors. Students must comprehend that they possess the ability to change their behaviors in order to reach their goals and their personal potential. This is especially developmentally appropriate for high school students as they rely heavily on their peer groups for support and acceptance (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2016). Additionally, the school setting is where students may hear messages that elude to their failure and limitations due to factors outside of their control. When students are faced with this negativity, they often begin to believe these messages and act accordingly. Often, students with behavior issues blame others or outside forces for the way that they behave. When students believe they are capable of choosing their behavior, they begin understanding that there is no excuse for their negative behavior and they change. The role of the school counselor is to guide the student towards the understanding that they are capable of choosing their behavior.

There are situations over which we do not have control

Applying this basic belief to school counseling is especially important in the moments in which the student does not have control. School counselors work with adolescents who are still under the guardianship of their parents, implying that situations in the home which extend beyond their control may exist. Students are also subject to not only local school rules and policies, but also the law. It is essential they understand that choice can be limited. Another important consideration is that of every-day life events. A student may be having a difficult day because of the weather or a flat tire they discovered on their way to school. Students must understand that they possess limited control over life circumstances such as these and must learn to choose positive behaviors. Understanding this basic belief is preventative and fosters wellness because students will learn to anticipate obstacles they cannot prevent and have appropriate coping skills instilled within them. The role of the school counselor is to assist students in finding ways to cope with the events over which they do not have control.

Past events influence an individual's growth and development but the individual has the capacity to move forward and not allow the past detain them

Students come from diverse backgrounds and life experiences which contribute to shaping who they are and help explain their behaviors. A student's past influences who they are, whether it be positively or negatively and it is essential for the school counselor to be aware of this. School counselors must realize that the difficulties students face in regards to their career, academic and personal/social domains could be due to their backgrounds. School counselors should demonstrate

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sensitivity when addressing such issues and they should be briefly addressed if the student chooses; ultimately, the role of the school counselor is to assist the student in understanding that they have the potential to move forward and choose their behavior without allowing their pasts to detain them. This concept addresses prevention and wellness in that when a student understands that they are not a helpless victim, they are able to make positive choices in the career, academic, and personal/social (Mason & Duba, 2009). School counselors should also be aware that traumatic past events could have a lasting impact on a student and make referrals to licensed professional counselor or school-based mental health provider as needed. This basic belief would also be beneficial to communicate within the school environment. Often, teachers, administrators, peers, and even parents doubt the ability of a student based on their background. If school officials communicated this basic belief to their students and surrounding community, more would be motivated to achieve.

We are driven by seven basic needs: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization

Maslow's seven basic needs address motivation and like Maslow, I believe individuals are motivated to have their basic needs met (Corey, 2014). These needs consist of seven major categories. Physiological needs are those such as shelter, food, water, clothing, air, warmth, etc. Safety needs address protection, security, order, stability, etc. Needs of love and belonging include friendship, intimacy, and affection from the different groups in which the individual comes in contact with (family, peers, teachers, etc.). Esteem needs consist of self-esteem, achievement, mastery, etc. Cognitive needs address an individual's need for knowledge and meaning. Aesthetic needs are met through a search for beauty. Self-actualization needs are met when an individual sees their own potential, finds self-fulfillment, and seeks personal growth. For a student to be not only stable but also successful, they must be moving in the direction of self-actualization or already be in the process of becoming self-actualized.

Needs may or may not be met but individuals can strive to meet them or have them met

Needs are not met in the same ways for each student, but if needs are not being met, the student faces difficulty. The role of the school counselor is to assist the student in finding where they are in the process of having their needs met, which needs have not been met, and how they can have their needs met. The seven basic needs allow for the counselor to have a concrete way of evaluating and understanding the needs of their students. The school counselor also plays a role in assisting the student in understanding that they can strive to have their needs met because they can choose their own behaviors.

Special Considerations of the Five Basic Beliefs

While the five basic beliefs should be effective in most students' circumstances, there are special cases in which school counselors should respond to with a distinct sensitivity. School counselors should address the first basic belief (The only person an individual has control over is him or herself) with caution with students with impulse control issues, autism spectrum disorder, schizophrenia, medical

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issues such as seizures, and other issues that prevent a student from choosing their behaviors. Not handling these issues with sensitivity could cause harm to the student in causing them to feel helpless and disempowered. These are also scenarios in which it may be beneficial for the school counselor to explain the second basic belief (there are situations we do not have control over). When addressing the seven basic needs with students it is important for the school counselor to consider those students whose needs may not be met due to circumstances outside their control such as socioeconomic factors.

Brief Counseling Techniques

The following techniques are based on the five basic beliefs of this brief counseling theory and assist the school counselor in helping students both effectively and efficiently. The techniques are based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, William Glasser's choice theory based reality therapy, and personal techniques I have found effective in working with adolescents.

Establishing Rapport

In a recent study by Williams et al. (2015), low-income students reported that they deeply valued their school counselor establishing a caring relationship with them. In order for counseling to be effective, the school counselor must have a relationship with the student. To establish this relationship, the counselor must be attentive to the student. The counselor should not be multitasking but be maintaining eye contact with the student and ensuring the student that they have the counselor's attention. The counselor should also refrain from judging or criticizing the student, regardless of their behavior (Banks, 2009). The counselor should also consider beginning the conversation with the student with a topic of interest to the student that is unrelated to the problem. This will help them feel more comfortable discussing the presenting issue.

Assessing Needs

One way to accomplish assessing the student's needs is by using the seven basic needs. It may be helpful for the counselor to have these needs posted in their office for students who have visual learning preferences. Students can view the needs and explore where they are currently in having their needs met and discuss the needs still to be met. This process allows the counselor to understand the level of disclosure the student is comfortable with and how willing they are to change behaviors (Banks, 2009).

Guide Student to Assess Change

In this technique, the counselor relates the behavior to be changed or need to be met to the problem. The counselor should guide the student to assess what they would like to see change or what needs they need met for their problem to be solved. The student should be asked what they are doing about the problem currently. This helps establish an understanding between the parties of what is not working to be sure to avoid the unhelpful behavior in the future (Banks, 2009).

Guide Student to Evaluate Current Behavior

The counselor should ask the student to evaluate their current behavior and explore how the current behavior has helped or hurt in solving their problem or having their needs met (Banks, 2009). This guides the student to understand that new behaviors could be set in place to ensure the student's success in solving their problem

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or having their needs met (Banks, 2009).

Guide Student to Establish Goals

The student should now have certain behaviors they would like to change to solve their problem or have their needs met. Because their time with the counselor will be brief (spanning only a few sessions), the goal should be directly related to the behavior needing to be changed and should be simple and measurable. For example, if the student's belonging needs with peers are not being met, a simple and measurable goal could be for the student to join a club and begin attending the meetings bi-weekly for the remainder of the school year.

Encouragement

Time with the school counselor should always end with encouragement and a reminder that the student only has control over him or herself. Encouragement from the counselor allows the student to understand that there is someone in the school building that is for them and willing to help them have their needs met. Reminding the student that they only have control over him or herself empowers the student to believe that they are capable of achieving their goals and that they do not need to be concerned about issues outside of their control.

Case Study

Jeannie is a fifteen year old high school sophomore who is on the varsity basketball team. Jeannie has been sent to the counseling office by her teacher because she is consistently not turning in her homework. This is of particular concern to her teacher because Jeannie is not passing her tests and consequently, may not pass the class. Jeannie is worried this may mean her coach will not keep her on the basketball team.

According to my personal theory, my first step would be to establish a relationship with Jeannie. I would first speak to her about basketball and how she began playing. This would show Jeannie that I am genuinely interested in her and her presence in my office. Next, I would speak to her about her needs by showing her a poster of the seven basic needs and explaining to her what each of them mean. I would allow her to determine which of her needs are currently not being met. Jeannie may disclose that she feels her esteem needs are not being met because she feels she cannot master the material in her math class. This would show me that she may not be completing her work in class because she does not grasp the material. I would then guide Jeannie to assess change and hopefully she would be able to discern that she needs to change her behavior by not only turning in her work but also asking questions in class, finding a math tutor, and attending tutoring sessions with the teacher. Jeannie would then evaluate her current behavior by explaining what is not working with what she is doing. My hope would be that Jeannie would understand that her current avoidance behavior in not completing her work is hurting her, not helping. Once Jeannie evaluates her current behavior, we could then formulate a plan of action through the establishment of goals. Jeannie would have to create her own simple, measurable goals, but I could help her with some ideas such as attending tutoring or extra help sessions three times per week.

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Resource Review

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Introduction to the Professional Literature Reviews

GSCA Journal Editor

Children and adolescents today are faced with a plethora of challenges and issues on a level that has not been experienced in any generations before. One way to assist with facing these challenges and or issues is through the use of books. Books provide an alternative method of helping students learn how to cope and/or begin the healing process. Books are beneficial for more than just the enjoyment of reading!

The goal of using books is to find the right book specific to the behavioral, emotional or social need. The right book allows children and adolescents to feel like they have met someone just like them. Students can now realize that they are not alone and that there are others facing the same feelings and dilemmas as they are. Students are able to identify with the characters in the books and have a sense of "I can do it too." Books open up discussions and with discussions finding solutions become easier. Further use of activities can prove to be therapeutic thus allowing students to reflect and express themselves.

The following book reviews were done by school counselors-in-training for a class project and are truly worthy of being shared with professional school counselors to use in their comprehensive developmental school counseling program.

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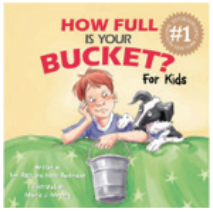
Elementary School Level Counseling Book Review

Jenna Hecht, School Counseling Intern, Mercer University

Focus: Social Skills Teaching and Training.

Two great books for school counselors to use in their school counseling programs are How Full Is Your Bucket written by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer and Mr. Peabody's Apples written by Madonna. How Full Is Your Bucket is geared toward elementary school-aged children, but is best taught in 1st or 2nd grade. Mr. Peabody's Apples is meant for older elementary and younger middle school-aged students, 5th-6th grade. Both books challenge students to empathize with others and consider others' feelings when making decisions. They are excellent books and great tools when teaching students social skills.

How Full Is Your Bucket



Summary

Published in 2009 by Gallup Press, this book is about a little boy, named Felix, who struggles getting along with others, especially his sister. In the beginning of the book, Felix's sister asks Felix to play blocks. Catching Felix unfairly yelling at his younger sister, Felix's grandfather pulls him aside and explains to him that he has dipped from his sister's bucket. Felix's grandfather goes on to say that everyone has an invisible bucket. When people's buckets are full they are happy, but when their buckets are empty they are sad. Saying something cruel or inconsiderate to others causes their buckets to empty water. However, saying something kind or providing help to others puts drops back into their buckets. The next day at school, Felix begins to notice everyone else's buckets. He sees the positive effects of saying encouraging words to others. He even realizes that when he puts drops into others' buckets, it fills up his bucket too. When Felix gets back home, he sees that his sister's bucket is relatively empty because she had a bad day. Now that Felix understands how to fill others' buckets, he asks his sister to play blocks with him. The story ends with both Felix and his sister playing blocks with full buckets.

Recommendations Using How Full Is Your Bucket

How Full Is Your Bucket meets many of the ASCA National Model's standards for students. For instance, the book teaches students empathy. It inspires young children to create positive and supportive relationships with others and use social maturity to create an encouraging environment. With this said, How Full Is Your Bucket would be a fantastic book to use during social skills groups and/or classroom guidance lessons. Young elementary-aged students can learn how to show empathy toward others and effectively support those around them.

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After sharing this book with a class or group, a great activity would be to have the students practice filling each other's buckets. Each student would either receive his/her own plastic bucket or bucket made out of paper. The counselor would cut out paper water drops on which the students could write encouraging statements about their classmates. Then, the students would be asked to say and place an encouraging "drop" into another student's bucket. Each time a student puts a drop in another student's bucket, he/she would also put a drop in his/her own bucket. After the activity, the counselor would ask the students how they felt both putting drops into others' buckets and receiving drops in their own buckets. This exercise would allow students to practice saying encouraging words to their classmates and witness the effects of filling another's bucket.

Mr. Peabody's Apples

Summary

Mr. Peabody's Apple's was published in 2003 by Callaway Editions. The story takes place in a small town called Happyville, where Mr. Peabody is the beloved history teacher and baseball coach. Everyday on his way to work, Mr. Peabody takes an apple from Mr. Funkadeli's fruit shop. Tommy Tittlebottom notices Mr. Peabody's routine and rushes to tell his friends. Word spreads rapidly that Mr. Peabody is stealing Mr. Funkadeli's apples. When only a few of the players show up to the baseball game, Mr. Peabody asks one of the team members, Billy, what is going on. Billy tells Mr. Peabody that everyone thinks he is a thief. Billy explains that Tommy saw him take an apple, so he told everyone that Mr. Peabody steals from Mr. Funkadeli. Mr. Peabody is very hurt, especially when he notices on his walk home that everyone is whispering about him and avoiding him. Later, Mr. Peabody takes Tommy to Mr. Funkadeli's market so that Mr. Funkadeli can explain to Tommy that Mr. Peabody does indeed pay for his apples. Mr. Funkadeli further explains that Mr. Peabody pays in advance, stating that he has never taken an apple without paying for it first. Tommy, feeling guilty, asks Mr. Peabody how he can fix the situation. Mr. Peabody takes Tommy to the baseball field and cuts open a pillow letting all the feathers fly through the wind. Mr. Peabody then asks Tommy to pick up all of the feathers. When Tommy states that such a task would be impossible, Mr. Peabody agrees, explaining that such a task is like cleaning up a rumor. It is very difficult to fully fix the damage caused by a rumor. The story ends with Tommy saying, "I guess I have a lot of work ahead of me" as he and Mr. Peabody walk away each eating one of Mr. Funkadeli's apples (Madonna, 2003, p. 28).

Recommendations Using How Full Is Your Bucket

This book would work well for a 5th or 6th grade classroom guidance lesson to teach students about the effects gossip and rumors have on others. The aim of the lesson would be to meet ASCA's (2014) social skills standards concerning empathy and supportive relationships. Late elementary school and middle school are times when cliques form and student identities develop. Students are more likely to gossip and spread rumors as a way to preserve their own identities;

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thus, this book would be a great tool to teach students empathy and help them understand the power in their words.

A good exercise that could follow this book is the rolled-up paper activity. Each student in the classroom would receive a piece of paper. The counselor would instruct the students to roll up their papers. They can stomp on them, crumple them, and crush them. The school counselor would explain that these actions are like spreading rumors or gossiping about another person. The students would then be instructed to unroll the paper. The goal would be to make the paper look as crisp and as flat as it did before they crumpled it up. Students will find that such a task is impossible. The school counselor would explain how the activity is similar to spreading a rumor. Just as Mr. Peabody explained to Tommy, words have power, and it is nearly impossible to fix the damage caused by spreading a rumor or gossiping about another person. In this activity, the hope is for students to gain awareness of how their words and actions affect others.

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Professional School Counseling Library Book Review

Monique M. Santana, School Counseling Intern at Mercer University

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Anderson, L.H. (1999). Speak. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux. Book

Summary

Melinda Sordino is a 9th grader in Syracuse, New York who does not speak very much and is depressed. She feels this way because she was raped at a party the summer before she started high school. At this party, she tried to call the police for help but instead they came and broke up the party leaving her peers angry at her for "squealing". Without realizing that she was raped, they continue to bully her because she called the police. Melinda is withdrawing more and more while carrying this secret. She spends a lot of her time at school hiding in the custodian's closet and she is kicked out of every social circle she once belonged to. Her only safe place is her art class where she forms an alliance with her art teacher, Mr. Freeman, who encourages her to be creative and express herself through creating art.

Throughout the novel Melinda is haunted by what happened to her and her attacker, Andy Evans, continues to harass her at school. Melinda continues to be bullied by her peers and begins to perform poorly academically and skips school more often but when she finally admits to herself that she was raped, she begins the healing process. Melinda is finally able to tell her former best friend, Rachel, what happened to her out of concern for Rachel who is now dating Andy. Although the conversation with Rachel does not go as expected, Melinda begins to feel freedom from her secret when she speaks about it. From this moment on, Melinda begins to take back her life and heal from her trauma. Melinda begins to reconnect with her former friend Ivy and begins to express herself to a greater degree in art class.

Recommended use

This novel is appropriate for use with adolescents of the high school population (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students). Because classroom guidance is not as prevalent at the high school level, this book would be better used as recommended reading for a student the school counselor would meet with in an individual session. The novel would be excellent to recommend to students who may be referred to the counselor because they are bullying other students. The focus of the discussion with a student reading this book would be on empathy and bullying, but the school counselor could also use this opportunity to teach the student about

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sexual violence and harassment. The school counselor could help define sexual violence and sexual harassment to ensure the student has an understanding of those definitions. The following are two questions regarding the empathy and bullying aspects of the novel that the school counselor could explore with the student reading his novel.

What could Heather have done instead of ending her friendship with Melinda?

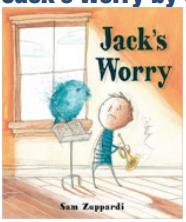
Heather is a new student who rides Melinda's bus who is desperately trying to climb the social ladder. She tries to be friendly to Melinda when it is convenient to her but eventually ends her "friendship" with Melinda because she acts too depressed. She tells Melinda they can be friends again when she is out of the "life sucks" phase.

This question would be beneficial to explore with a student who is participating in bullying behaviors because it elicits exploration of what helping behavior looks like and what empathy is. Heather notices that Melinda is depressed yet she hurts instead of helping. Heather could have told her she may need to peak to the school counselor or her parents but instead she removes herself from the situation. Students do not necessarily need to help students with their problems themselves, but if they notice a student is depressed or sad they can encourage them to talk to someone instead of pushing them away. In addition to being a helper, Heather could have shown empathy and acted after reflecting on how she would feel if someone ended a friendship with her because she was depressed.

How would have Melinda's bullies acted differently if they had known what had happened to her at the party?

This question continues the exploration of empathy. Melinda was continuously bullied by her peers throughout this novel: her peers ignore her, her former friends have disowned her, and food is thrown at her in the cafeteria and no one has any idea of what Melinda is experiencing. If Melinda's peers had known that she had been raped, they would most likely not have thrown it. If Melinda's former friends had known that she was rape, they most likely would not have thrown Melinda out of their social circle. This question should move the student to think about what the student they bullied may have gone though. Until you speak to someone and know them well, you do not know what they are going through in their lives. Bullying someone that is going through a difficult time could cause serious damage to the person emotionally and even physically. The school counselor should motivate the student to think about what a person may be going through before they think about treating them poorly.

Jack's Worry by Sam Zappardi



Zuppardi, S. (2016). Jack's Worry. Candlewick Press.

Book Summary

Jack wakes up one day feeling very fearful and worried. Jack is a young boy who enjoys playing his trumpet but he realizes that the day of his first music

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concert he wakes up with this "Worry". Jack tries to hide from the Worry but it follows him wherever he goes whether he is playing outside or trying to play his trumpet. Jack's mother even makes him breakfast that morning and he is unable to enjoy it because of how he feels. The Worry continues to grow larger and larger until Jack finally tells his mother he does not want to go to his concert because he is afraid he will make a mistake and his mother won't love him. Jacks mother reassures him that she will still love him even if he makes mistakes and tells him that the concert is for fun and not to play perfectly. When Jack arrives at the concert, he notices his friends have Worries too and he helps them to get rid of their Worries.

Recommended Use

This picture book would be best utilized with elementary school students, kindergarten through 3rd grade who struggle with anxiety and worry. The book would be ideal for a small group environment so that students have the opportunity to express themselves more freely than in the larger classroom setting. This is especially important because students with anxiety may feel anxiety regarding speaking in front of large groups of students. The book is very helpful for visual learners due to the personification of the illustrations of Jack's anxiety. Students are physically able to see the feelings and hopefully relate them to theirs.

Anxiety is common among students of all ages but it can be more difficult for younger students who may not completely understand their feelings and how express and cope with them. One of the activities a school counselor could do with an anxiety focused small group is before and after drawings. In this book, Jack's worry is drawn as a large, dark, blob that accurately depicts what anxiety and worry feels like for most people. Throughout the book, this is the worry that follows Jack around but before Jack feels fearful, the worry is shown as a small blue-green blob. After reading the novel, the school counselor could have the students draw their worry before they feel worried and after they feel worried. They could also draw themselves next to the worry and depict how they feel when the worry is present and when the worry is not. This allows the students to reflect on how their worry affects them and shows the school counselor how the individual students view perceive their sense of fear. This activity is also good for kinesthetic learners who may have trouble with the verbal or listening aspects of the group.

The school counselor should also address putting words to the anxiety and teach students to express what they feel. Students could complete the following sentences:

- I feel worried because _____.
- When I feel worried, I feel _____.

Teaching students how to formulate sentences about their worry could help them find relief, like Jack did, in verbally expressing what they feel when they are scared or worried. This portion of the lesson could also be used to encourage the students to express their worry to someone they trust. The school counselor could ask the students who they would tell if they feel worried and offer suggestions such as parents, siblings, teachers, and their school counselor.

Using the drawings as visual representation of the students' worries, the school counselor could help students develop strategies for dealing with their worry and

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get their worry to go from looking like their 'before' drawing to their 'after' drawing. The school counselor could ask them, "What would help you make your worry go away?" Students could then discuss what they do when they want to get rid of their Worry. Students who do not have ways they deal with their worry could listen to the ideas of other students.

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Practicing school counselors at all school levels, their supervisors, school counselor educators, graduate students, and related professionals are encouraged to submit original works.

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All manuscripts should conform to the guidelines for publication listed in the latest Edition of the American Psychological Association Publication Manual.

Manuscripts which are currently under publication consideration by another publisher, or previously published work should not be submitted. Only original material will be reviewed.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word attachment to the GSCA Journal Editor at journal@gaschoolcounselors.com.

Manuscripts will be accepted throughout the year. The journal will be published once per year in November.

Manuscripts longer than 20 pages will not be reviewed. Keep titles and headings concise.

» Manuscripts should include:

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• Abstract of the article should not be more than 75 words.

• Cover letter in which the merits of the manuscript are briefly described, and a statement indicating that the manuscript is an original work not under review consideration or previously published elsewhere is included.

Author(s) bear full responsibility for the accuracy of their submission.

Each manuscript will be reviewed by a minimum of two editors. All authors will be notified of initial receipt of manuscripts, as well as a final determination regarding the manuscript.

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GSCA
Georgia School Counselor Association
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GSCA Executive Office
1827 Powers Ferry Road
Building 14, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30339
Ph: 770-971-6002
info@gaschoolcounselor.com