

A CLARIFICATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS

These ideas come as a result of the writer (Luis South) engaging many Education Counselors, as well as other Health and Human Services staff, in discussion over the past 18 years. **THESE IDEAS ARE OFFERED AS A MEANS TO SHARE BASIC CONCEPTS DERIVED FROM DIALOGUES AMONG EDUCATORS AND OTHERS INTERESTED IN FURTHER STRUCTURING HOW COUNSELING WORKS BEST IN EDUCATION SETTINGS preK-12.**

- 1) Professional educators must acknowledge and accept the distinguishing factors that differentiate COUNSELING from GUIDANCE. GUIDANCE IS DIRECTIVE AND IS MOST OFTEN COMMON SENSE INSTRUCTION. NO ONE NEEDS TO GO TO COLLEGE IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SPONTANEOUS GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS. THERE ARE CURRICULAE THAT ARE GUIDANCE ORIENTED TO DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS. THESE DO REQUIRE SPECIALIZED TRAINING (e.g. **Second Step**). COUNSELING, LIKE A STRUCTURED GUIDANCE CURRICULUM, REQUIRES PREPARATION AND UTILIZES CONTINUITY OF IDEAS AS A MEANS TO DEVELOP GROWTH IN STUDENTS. HOWEVER COUNSELING IS DISTINGUISHABLE FROM GUIDANCE BY VIRTUE OF ALLOWING THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF PERSONAL SPACE FOR THE STUDENT TO OWN THEIR SELF-AWARENESS.
- 2) AN EDUCATION COUNSELING PROGRAM MAY INCLUDE A CLINICAL COUNSELING COMPONENT, BUT EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING IS FOCUSED UPON PROMOTING AND ENHANCING THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENT, FAMILY, AND STAFF BY IMPLEMENTING A RESOLUTION PROCESS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING.
- 3) EDUCATION COUNSELORS LOSE FLEXIBILITY TO HELP IN DAILY SITUATIONS WHERE EMERGENCIES ARISE IF THEIR SCHEDULES ARE SPECIFIC INSTEAD OF GENERIC.
- 4) EDUCATION COUNSELORS PERFORM DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THEIR STUDENTS. WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING AN EDUCATION COUNSELOR IS CALLED UPON TO WORK AS: COUNSELOR, GUIDANCE SPECIALIST, TEACHER, CONSULTANT (REGARDING BEHAVIOR/ACADEMICS) OR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE WHICH ROLE A COUNSELOR IS FULFILLING WHEN CARRYING OUT DIFFERENT DUTIES.
- 5) AN EDUCATION COUNSELOR IS ABLE TO PROVIDE THE BEST QUALITY SERVICE IF THERE IS A SPACE DESIGNATED FOR COUNSELING AND AN OPERABLE TELEPHONE. COUNSELING IS HINDERED IF EVER THERE IS NO SPACE AND/OR NO PHONE READILY AVAILABLE TO THE EDUCATION COUNSELOR.
- 6) EDUCATION COUNSELORS ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO APPLY PUNITIVE MEASURES AS A MEANS TO "TEACH STUDENTS A LESSON."

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- 7) COLLABORATION IS A TERM THAT HAS DIFFERENT PARADIGMS. L.A.U.S.D NEEDS TO APPLY ONE MODEL THROUGHOUT ALL DISTRICTS SO THAT COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS ACROSS THE DISTRICT CAN HAPPEN MORE READILY; PROFESSIONALS WILL BE MORE COORDINATED AND FOCUSED.
- 8) THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS preK-12 CAN BE FOUND INSIDE OF THE BELOW WEB PAGE AT:

<http://www.educounselor.com/roles.htm>

- 9) **SECOND STEP** IS A GUIDANCE ORIENTED CURRICULUM DESIGNED TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOL SETTING. IT REQUIRES EXTENSIVE COLLABORATION AMONG ALL MEMBERS OF A SCHOOL COMMUNITY. IT IS NEITHER THE EXCLUSIVE PROGRAM OF ANY ONE PERSON OR DEPARTMENT NOR IS IT A CURE ALL FOR ALL THAT IS WRONG AT A SCHOOL SITE. IT IS SIMPLY A VIABLE COMPONENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS VIOLENT BEHAVIOR AMONG YOUTH.
- 10) EDUCATION COUNSELORS ARE NOT MECHANICS. WE WORK TO PRODUCE BALANCED HUMAN BEINGS. THIS CAN BEST BE ACCOMPLISHED IN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS NURTURING, HARMONIOUS AND GENUINELY RESPECTFUL.
- 11) IN ORDER TO DELIVER THE HIGHEST QUALITY SUPPORT, USE OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING COUNSELING OR GUIDANCE TO STUDENTS NEEDS TO BE COORDINATED THROUGH THE EDUCATION COUNSELING OFFICE BEING THAT EDUCATION COUNSELORS ARE TRAINED AND EXPERIENCED IN HOW SUCH SERVICES CAN BE DISSEMINATED WITHIN A SCHOOL SETTING.
- 12) *ON THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL, STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING THE GREATEST NEED FOR COUNSELING SERVICES ARE LISTED ON THE EDUCATION COUNSELOR'S CLIENT LIST. FOR PURPOSES OF ACCURACY IN COUNTING NUMBER OF CLIENTS ON A CASE LOAD, PARENTS MUST COME IN FOR FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW THEN SIGN AN AGREEMENT FORM ALLOWING THEIR ELEMENTARY AGED CHILD TO BE ENROLLED IN THE EDUCATION COUNSELING PROGRAM.
- 13) WHENEVER POSSIBLE, THE EDUCATION COUNSELOR NEEDS TO BE THE POINT PERSON TO REFER STUDENTS OUT FOR DIFFERENT SUPPORT SERVICES.
- 14) EDUCATION COUNSELORS WORK WITH THE PRINCIPAL AND TEACHERS TO PROMOTE AND HELP ESTABLISH A VIABLE COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, THAT WILL INCLUDE ALL STAFF.

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- 15) ALL SCHOOLS DESIGNATED TO FUNCTION UNDER SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT OR AS A LEARN SCHOOL MAY CHOOSE TO OPENLY ADOPT LANGUAGE FROM THE **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT** PHILOSOPHY IN ORDER TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORT.
- 16) IN DEFINING MORE OF WHAT EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD DO TO BETTER SERVE SCHOOL SITES WITH HIGHER AT-RISK POPULATIONS, EDUCATION COUNSELORS MAY OFFER TO SERVE AS LIAISONS BETWEEN PROBATIONARY TEACHERS AND AGGRESSIVE PARENTS AS A MEANS TO AVOID LAW SUITS AND BETTER TRAIN NEW STAFF.
- 17) *IN DEFINING MORE OF WHAT EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD DO TO BETTER SERVE SCHOOL SITES WITH HIGHER AT-RISK POPULATIONS, EDUCATION COUNSELORS MAY OFFER TO ASSIST AND RELIEVE ALL TEACHERS FROM UNDUE STRESS.
- 18) LAP TOP COMPUTERS WOULD HELP TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO SERVE THE PURPOSE OF BETTER RECORD KEEPING AS WELL AS IMPROVING NETWORKING CAPABILITY BETWEEN THE VARIOUS DISCIPLINES.
- 19) LOCAL DISTRICTS PRESENTLY HAVE THE ABILITY TO MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO EQUIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS WITH CELL PHONES IF THERE IS NO PHONE IN THE EDUCATION COUNSELING OFFICE. CELL PHONES WOULD AIDE THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS BETTER ACCOUNTABILITY.
- 20) THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR SHOULD BE CONSULTED REGARDING DECISIONS TO SUSPEND AT-RISK STUDENTS. TOO MANY DAYS OFF FROM SCHOOL DUE TO SUSPENSIONS POTENTIALLY UNDERMINES CONTINUITY OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES.
- 21) SPACE PERMITTING, EACH EDUCATION COUNSELING OFFICE (preK-12) SHOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE TO SERVE STUDENTS INTERESTED IN VARIOUS TYPES OF CAREER, SOCIAL AND LIFE SKILLS INFORMATION. CORRECT USE OF TECHNOLOGY ENHANCES STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

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- 22) EDUCATION COUNSELORS NEED TO FORM ALLIANCES WITH CLINICAL COUNSELING AGENCIES THAT OFFER COLLABORATION BETWEEN ALL DISCIPLINES COMPRISING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND CLINICAL PROFESSIONALS. THIS IS MEANT TO INVOLVE BOTH CLINICIANS AND EDUCATION MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS IN MORE MEANINGFUL SHARING CONCERNING SPECIFIC CASES. IN THE PAST, MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS HAVE WORKED INDEPENDENTLY. THIS HAS TYPICALLY RESULTED IN LACK OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN COUNSELING STUDENTS.

AT TIMES THERE IS THE PROBLEM OF BEING UNCLEAR ABOUT THE PARTICULAR FOCUS OF COUNSELING AS EACH OF THE VARIOUS BRANCHES OF MENTAL HEALTH BECOME INVOLVED IN A SPECIFIC CASE.

- 23) IN DEFINING MORE OF WHAT EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD DO TO BETTER SERVE SCHOOL SITES WITH HIGHER AT-RISK POPULATIONS, EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD RECEIVE THE NAMES OF STUDENTS ENTERING A SCHOOL SITE DUE TO AN OPPORTUNITY TRANSFER IN ORDER TO ENGAGE THEM IN AN ORIENTATION PROCESS.

- 24) IN DEFINING MORE OF WHAT EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD DO TO BETTER SERVE SCHOOL SITES WITH HIGHER AT-RISK POPULATIONS: EDUCATION COUNSELORS COULD IDENTIFY FOSTER CARE CHILDREN AND THOSE RECENTLY RETURNED FROM FOSTER CARE AS A SPECIAL CATEGORY OF STUDENTS WHO ARE AUTOMATICALLY PLACED ON THE CASELOAD LIST. THIS WOULD BE PART OF THE STRATEGY TO MOVE FROM THE OLD SYSTEM OF BEING "REACTIVE" TO A NEW SYSTEM OF BEING "PROACTIVE" IN ORDER TO SAVE MORE LIVES.

FOR MORE, CONTACT **LUIS SOUTH** VIA THE INTERNET:
<http://www.educounselor.com/index.html>