Chapter One:

School social work; definition, history, and roles and tasks of school social workers and other supportive teams

Definition of School social work

- School social work is a specialized area of practice within the broad field of the social work profession. It is defined as, Social work services provided in the setting of an educational agency by credentialed or licensed school social workers.
- It is oriented toward helping students make satisfactory adjustments and coordinating and influencing the efforts of the school, the family, and the community to achieve this goal (NASW, 2002, p. 9)
- The school social work profession has consistently focused on coordinating the efforts of schools, families, and communities toward helping students improve their academic achievement and social, emotional, and behavioral competence by using its unique perspective of viewing the person in his or her environment.
- School social work is a complex and specialized field of practice that is affected by changes in education policy, research, and practice models that continue to evolve.

Major Events in the History of School Social Work

The profession of school social work began in the 20th century, influenced by immigration, life struggles, social conditions, and poverty which affected the development and expansion of educational opportunities for all children (Allen-Meares, 2006 & Agresta, 2004). In addition, Allen-Meares (1990) stated some specific influences such as the depression that brought attention to the lack of basic needs being met and without basic needs, food and shelter, the children were unable to learn. Social workers were known as "visiting teachers" and were

responsible for ensuring children went to school and to collaborate with teachers to help them understand the new immigrants (Agresta, 2004).

In the early 1900s social workers provided a vital link between school and communities to address truancy problems related to the family and community (Gainesin, 1996). It was not until 1913,in New York, that the first board of education approved and funded a visiting teacher program, and from the visiting teacher program emerged the National Association of Visiting Teachers (Allen-Meares, 2006). Beginning in 1918 each state had passed its own attendance law. The lack of effective enforcement of school attendance led to an examination of the problem. As a result, the responsibility of improving school attendance was recommended to be assigned to the school social worker, someone who is knowledgeable about the needs of children and the effects of social conditions (Allen-Meares, 2006). The development of social work within the schools was greatly impacted by the Great Depression of the 1930s, as were other social service programs for children. Due to the provision of food, shelter, and clothing occupying the majority of social workers time, services provided by visiting teachers were either abolished or seriously cut back (Allen-Meares, 1990). Hall (1936) found in this time of crisis social workers refocused their earlier commitment to changing adverse conditions in the schools and acting as the link between home, school, and community; therefore, school social workers sought a specialized role in providing emotional support for troubled children. Agresta (2004) found that within the 1940s and 1950s the term visiting teacher was replaced with the term school social worker and the profession adopted a more of a therapeutic and clinical approach for individual children within the schools.

1906–1907 - School social work services begin independently in New York City, Boston, and Hartford.

1913 - Rochester, NY becomes the first school system to finance school social work services.

1921- National Association of Visiting Teachers is established.

1923 - Commonwealth Fund of New York increases the visibility of school social workers by providing financial support for a program to prevent juvenile delinquency that includes the hiring of 30 school social workers in 20 rural and urban communities across the United States.

1945 - The U.S. Office of Education recommends that a professional school social work

certificate be a master's degree in social work (MSW).

1955- NASW by-laws provide for the establishment of school social work specialty.

1959- Specialist position in school social work is established in the U.S. Office of Education.

1969- "Social Change and School Social Work" is the national workshop held at the University of Pennsylvania and its proceedings resulted in the publication of the book entitled The School in the Community (1972).

1973- NASW Council on Social Work in Schools meets for the first time.

1975- Costin's school-community-pupil relations model of school social work practice is published.

1976- The first set of standards for school social work services are developed by NASW. These standards emphasize prevention as an important theme.

1985- NASW National School Social Work Conference "Educational Excellence in Transitional Times" is held in New Orleans, Louisiana, and results in the publication of Achieving Educational Excellence for Children At Risk, which contains papers from this conference.

1992- The school social work credentialing exam, developed by NASW, the Educational Testing Service, and Allen-Meares is administered for the first time.

1992 -Standards for social work services in schools are revised by the NASW Education Commission Task Force.

1994 - NASW launches school social work as its first practice section.

1994- The School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) is formed, independent of NASW.

Ecological Perspective as an Organizing Framework for School Social Work Practice

School social workers must be equipped with an intervention framework that does not view student misbehavior or learning problems in isolation.

The ecological perspective uniquely focuses on the reciprocal interactions of students with environmental factors. Within an ecological perspective, each child is viewed as an inseparable part of the various social systems (e.g., school, home, neighborhood, peer group) within which he or she must function (Apter & Propper, 1986). This perspective enables school social workers to broaden their conceptualization of students' problems and enlarges potential targets of intervention. Rather than viewing problems as disturbances located within the child, problems are viewed as a lack of "goodness of fit" between the child and his or her surrounding

environments. This view assumes that the academic and social tasks of the school environment present formidable challenges for children and youths with behavior and learning problems.

That is, within the school setting, problems experienced by children and youth are viewed as a discrepancy between the academic and social tasks of the school environment and the academic or behavioral competencies of children and youth (Schinke & Gilchrist, 1984). To address this discrepancy, school social workers must be dually focused in their interventions. That is, they must address specific environmental stressors as well as enhance the coping skills of students. Germain (1999) described this dual function of social work as strengthening students' coping patterns and growth potential on the one hand, and improving the quality of the impinging environment on the other. This dual focus, as illustrated in the case vignette at the beginning of this chapter, provides the student with a better chance of achieving positive outcomes (Whittaker, Shinke, &Gilchrist, 1986). The ecological perspective, with its dual focus, enables school social workers to carry out their unique mission in schools—assisting students as well as targeting detrimental conditions in schools, families, neighborhoods, and communities, especially those conditions that are harmful to vulnerable students.

The goal of **student-focused** interventions is to enhance the social competence of at-risk students through the teaching of specific skills as well as increasing environmental supports.

The goal of **system-focused** interventions is to make the school, family, neighborhood, and community more responsive to the needs of students during their development as well as to minimize the detrimental impact of risk factors that may provoke or exacerbate problematic student behavior.

The ecological perspective is congruent with strengths based and empowerment approach to practice. School social workers identify and build on strengths rather than focusing on deficits. Interventions based on strengths are an innovative approach to practice that is easily integrated into the school setting. In addition, the ecological perspective allows school social workers to be preventive and proactive in designing their interventions. For example, it is possible to identify at-risk students and implement interventions long before their learning and behavior problems become entrenched and serious. However, it is difficult to implement interventions based on the ecological perspective in schools. School social workers feel a tremendous "pull" to view all problems as disturbances within the child and it is much easier, as well as expected, to help

students adjust to dysfunctional school conditions, rather than targeting these detrimental conditions for change.

Ethical Dimensions of School Social Work Practice

School social workers will inevitably confront a number of ethical dilemmas where obligations to the client conflict with obligations to the school, where professional ethics conflict with a particular law, or where what ought to be done conflicts with his or her personal values. In providing services to students in the school setting, school social workers must strike a balance between their legal and ethical responsibilities. To do so, school social workers must be familiar with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics; federal, state, and local laws; as well as policies and procedures established by the local school board. The following are examples of ethical dilemmas applicable to school social work practice:

- A 14-year-old girl who is 10 weeks pregnant wants to carry the baby to full term but doesn't want the school social worker to let her parents know that she is pregnant.
- A student obtains a low score within the "normal" range on an intelligence test but needs the extra help afforded by special education; but to receive this help, this student will be given a label that will follow him for the rest of his life.
- A sexually active student asks the school social worker, who has been assigned to the school health clinic, for a condom in a school system that has recently adopted a policy that condoms can be distributed only with written parental permission.
- A school social worker who personally believes that pharmaceutical control of a student's behavior interferes with the child's welfare and freedom is asked to meet with parents who want to prescribe drugs for their child, whose behavior is disruptive.

A fundamental principle of all school social work practice is confidentiality. However, the school setting is one of the most problematic settings for social workers to maintain client confidentiality (Kopels, 1993). School social workers are frequently faced with having to decide what information needs to be shared and with whom this information should be shared. This is further complicated by the fact that laws and policies that pertain to other school personnel such as school psychologists, school counselors, and school nurses may differ from those governing school social workers. To assist school social workers in evaluating the need to share confidential information involving students and their families, the NASW (2001) and the School

Social Work Association of America (SSWAA, 2001) have provided several guidelines, including:

- ✓ School social workers must become familiar with specific state laws and regulations as well as school district policies governing confidentiality and minors, since these vary from state to state. For example, they should be aware of state statutes that protect the confidentiality of minor students seeking treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, information about and access to birth control, and pregnancy related health care and counseling.
- ✓ In obtaining informed consent, school social workers must tell students and families, at the onset of services, that absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and openly discuss the limits of confidentiality. For example, all states mandate that school social workers must report suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the local child protection agency or to police, even when this information is shared in confidence. Additionally, if students indicate intent or plans to harm themselves or others, school social workers must disclose this information.
- ✓ Disclose information obtained from students or parents with other school personnel only on a "need-to-know" basis and only for compelling professional reasons.
- ✓ Parents have the right to inspect and review their child's education records; however, personal notes kept for use by school social workers are not considered education records and are, therefore, confidential.
- ✓ Confidential reports should be sent via fax only when necessary. In such cases, the cover letter should note that the material is confidential and is intended for professional use only by the designated recipient.
- ✓ School social workers should maintain written documentation indicating with whom confidential information has been shared.
- ✓ School social workers must become familiar with the limits of confidentiality and "information sharing" as they pertain to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act(IDEA).
- ✓ In instances where there are no clear-cut policies or laws, in deciding whether to share confidential information, the school social worker must consider his or her responsibility

to the student and consider this against responsibility to the family and the school community.

Before sharing any confidential information, school social workers should involve the student and student's family indecisions involving a breach of confidentiality.

_ School social workers must always consider the consequences of sharing any information and assume responsibility for sharing this information. However, it is important to remember that any action of a professional social worker is judged by a reasonable standard of care, that is, what a reasonable person in a similar situation would do.

Roles and Tasks of School Social Workers and Other Professional Support Staff

In discussing the roles and tasks of the school social worker, it is important to consider that school social workers do not practice in isolation but are members of a multidisciplinary team of school professionals. Unfortunately, being a team member can sometimes result in role confusion and "turf battles." For example, school social workers and school counselors may both provide individual and small group counseling, or school social workers and school psychologists may both provide consultation to teachers. However, there are distinctions in the roles and tasks among professional groups that comprise a school's multidisciplinary team. The following is a very brief description of these distinct roles and tasks:

- **School psychologists** are primarily responsible for administering academic and psychological tests with students having learning or behavioral problems, interpreting these test results, and, as a member of the multidisciplinary team, determine eligibility for special education services. School psychologists also frequently provide consultation to classroom teachers, and some also provide individual and group counseling to students and work with parents.
- **School counselors** in elementary schools may provide individual and small group counseling to students. They may also conduct activities with entire classrooms of students. In some instances, they may function as disciplinarians or as a linkage between home and school. In secondary schools, school counselors are focused primarily on assisting students with their class schedules and monitoring their academic progress as well as assisting students with college and career choices.

- **School nurses** provide vision and hearing testing in an effort to determine possible obstacles to learning and sometimes monitor youngsters who have health problems. School nurses are also increasingly involved in developing health education curriculums.
- **School social workers** draw on a number of diverse roles and tasks to meet the unique needs of each school and the priorities of each building principal. Using the ecological framework as an organizing principle, these tasks include
    - ✓ advocating for at risk students and their families;
    - ✓ empowering families to share their concerns with school officials;
    - ✓ maintaining open lines of communication between home and school;
    - ✓ helping families to understand their children's educational needs;
    - ✓ consulting with teachers about students' living situations and neighborhood conditions;
    - ✓ Making referrals to community agencies;
    - ✓ tracking students involved with multiple agencies;
    - ✓ And working with the larger community to identify and develop resources to better serve the needs of at-risk students and their families.

As members of a school's multidisciplinary team, school social workers are involved in a number of activities including:

- ✓ participating in conferences related to students' behavior and academic progress;
- ✓ collaborating with teachers and other school professionals to assess student needs and developing strategies to meet their needs;
- ✓ being a member of a school wide crisis response team;
- ✓ preparing a comprehensive developmental assessment and social history as part of the required multidisciplinary evaluation;
- ✓ and preventing inappropriate labeling of students by assessing adaptive behavior, cultural background, and socioeconomic factors that may interfere with a child's learning or impact a child's behavior in school. School social workers also
- ✓ provide individual and group counseling to students;
- ✓ Conduct classroom activities; and design, implement, and evaluate school-based prevention programs.

Chapter Two

The Organizational Structure and Processes of the School

To practice effectively in the school setting, social workers must understand the organizational context of the school and how this unique organizational context influences the development and delivery of social work interventions in schools. Just as we cannot understand human behavior in isolation, we cannot understand what happens in schools without examining the forces that influence a school from within and from without. All that occurs in schools must be understood in relation to a school's relationship with its environment.

A number of general systems theory concepts are useful in understanding these complex relationships. The first of these concepts is open systems. By their very nature, schools are open systems that are impacted by their immediate environment. To understand why things happen the way they do in schools, school social workers must understand the forces that are at work in the larger society because schools reflect and transmit the dominant norms and values of the larger society (Pawlak &Cousins, 1999). For example, school policies and procedures often reflect the racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia of the larger society. Punitive school discipline policies, by disproportionately targeting African American males for suspension and expulsion, reflect the institutional racism of the larger society.

Community violence also infects the school environment. Another useful general systems theory concept in understanding the complex relationship between the school and its environment is the concept of boundaries. Even though schools are open systems, they do possess boundaries, or regions, that separate them from their environment (Barker, 1987). One example of a boundary that often separates a school and its environment are the norms and expectations that govern children's behavior. For some students, the norms that govern behavior in a school are in direct conflict with norms that govern behavior in their home and neighborhood. For instance, students who are encouraged by their parents to defend themselves by fighting back if they are struck by another person find that this behavior is not tolerated within the school environment and results in a suspension or even an expulsion from school.

Where behavioral norms and expectations at home are congruent with those of the school, students have an easier time navigating through both environments. School social workers must understand the implications of this incongruity and reach out to those students and parents who have a difficult time understanding and, hence, following these norms and

expectations. Pawlak and Cousins (1999, p. 151) have offered a series of questions to assist the school social worker in assessing the norms that govern behavior, policies, and procedures in a school.

These include:

_ What are the rules and procedures used by school officials and faculty in their transactions with students?

_ Are these rules and procedures applied equitably among students who, for example, face suspension and expulsion?

_ Do students with particular characteristics experience different and less favorable career paths (e.g., low-income versus upper-income students, girls versus boys, White students versus minority students)?

_ Do students with particular attributes have equal access toschool curricula, programs, and activities?

_ Are some groups of students often inappropriately classified?

_ Which teachers or staff members are working with which students?

Other organizational concepts that help to increase school social workers' understanding of the social organization and processes of schools are formalization, standardization, and centralization.

formalization refers to the degree to which rules, policies, and procedures that govern behavior in the organization are set forth in writing and codified. The degree of formalization in a school is reflected in a school's discipline handbook for students. For example, are there rules and consequences for every possible situation?

Standardization is a type of formalization in which organizations have uniform ways of dealing with uniform situations. For example, to what extent can school administrators exercise discretion in disciplining students?

Centralization refers to the concentration of power, authority, and decision making at the central office while decentralization refers to site-based management where building principals have the authority to make important decisions at the building level and where teachers have a "say" in decision making in their school.

These concepts are important because they impact the types of services that school social workers are able to offer in schools. For example, Chavkin (1993) found that school social

workers employed by more formalized and centralized school districts were more likely limited to traditional micro level interventions and less likely to implement macro level interventions.

Another organizational concept that is useful to school social work practice is the concept of subsystems. **A subsystem** is a part of a system that itself comprises interacting and reciprocally influencing elements. Five subsystems in schools in which school social workers can intervene:

1. In the school, the classroom is the main part of the production subsystem where students are educated and socialized. School social workers are involved in the production sub system when they conduct classroom activities.
2. The maintenance subsystem is concerned with "tying people into their functional roles. School social workers work within the maintenance subsystem when they serve as consultants in helping define the functional roles of teachers, principals, and students in the school.
3. The supportive subsystem is "concerned with exporting the finished product into the environment and maintaining a favorable environment for the operation of the system. The school social worker works within the supportive subsystem by intervening with community agencies that link the school and the community and by aiding in the transition of students into the environment when they leave school.
4. The adaptive subsystem ensures "organizational survival in a changing environment. Since school social workers are often in a position to know students' and the community's criticisms of the school and what student needs are going unmet, they provide an important feedback function as a part of the adaptive subsystem.
5. The managerial subsystem consists of all the managers in the school system including principals, the superintendent, and the school board. School social workers may "work with other managers toward establishing system goals and the responsibility for carrying them out.

Say something on the concept of subculture!

The Culture and Climate of the School Perhaps the most important organizational concepts for school social workers to be knowledgeable about are culture and climate.

A school's culture and climate significantly impact and influence students' behavior and learning (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1997). A school's culture has been defined as the beliefs and expectations apparent n a school's daily routine, including how colleagues interact with one another, and the norms or beliefs shared by students, teachers,

administrators, and other workers in a school. Culture is the socially shared and transmitted knowledge of what is and what ought to be (Hamilton & Richardson, 1995).

Closely related to culture is the concept of climate. A school's climate "is the heart and soul of a school. It is about that essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being at their school each day" (Freiberg & Stein, 1999, p. 11).

A major challenge facing school leaders and school social workers today is to change the culture and climate of a school when it impedes progress. A number of factors are involved in determining the culture and climate of any given school. A list of school risk factors identified in the literature can be found in the following table:

School Risk Factors

_ Suspension and corporal punishment
_ Punitive or inadequate attendance policies
_ tracking and differential grading procedures
_ Grade retention
_ Teacher expectations and attitudes
_ Large school size
_ Absence of a stimulating and innovative curriculum
_ Numerous grade-level transitions
_ Climate of low academic expectations
_ Crime and violence
_ Gang-related activities in or around school

As seen in the above table, discipline and attendance policies and practices, school size, teacher's expectations, curriculum, and influences outside the school have a negative impact on a school's culture and climate. Other risk factors include hostile and suspicious relationships between administrators and school staff or between school staff and students (Corbin, 2001). An important role of the school social worker is to use his or her considerable mediation and group work skills to change these destructive patterns.

At the same time, a number of protective factors, if present in a school, can buffer these risk factors and result in a more positive school culture and climate. Positive relationships, bonding, and engagement, and an appropriate degree of structure and control are positively

correlated with a school culture and climate that is humane and invitational for staff, students, and parents.

Given the risk and protective factors that are present in schools and the culture and climate they create, school social workers should focus their interventions on changing or modifying the culture and climate of a school so that schools become safe havens for all children and youth—places where teachers, students, administrators, parents, and support staff all feel invited to participate and welcome and share a psychological sense of community.

School Protective Factors

_ Educational engagement, school membership or bonding

_ Attachment relationships with emotionally significant adults

_ Appropriate degree of environmental structure and control

_ A developmental approach to curriculum that supports coping and self-esteem

_ The acquisition of coping skills

A renewed understanding of the role of the school as a protective factor and caregiving environment in children's lives is critical (Garbarino, Dubrow, Kostelny, &Pardo, 1992).

Fortunately, some schools are already leading the way in transforming their school culture to include positive approaches to discipline, opportunities for teachers and students to bond, and training for teachers in classroom management techniques (Civil Rights Project, 2000).

The Political Environment of the School

School social workers practice in a "host" setting where the focus is education rather than social work. Unlike mental health centers or child welfare agencies, school personnel frequently do not understand or appreciate social work services. Consequently, school social workers are vulnerable; they may occupy a position of relatively low status within the schools they serve and are often under scrutiny.

To carry out their unique mission in schools—facilitating systemic change on behalf of vulnerable groups of students—school social workers must discover how to acquire more informal power and become more politically savvy. Rather than avoiding the political process, school social workers must become engaged in it, guided by personal and professional values and ethics. In an important and provocative article, Lee (1983) provided a very informative and detailed explanation of the many political processes that impact school social work services and

provide guidance on how school social workers can acquire more informal power. For example, Lee stated that decisions made in schools result from "battles between competing interest groups" rather than a rational decision-making process.

In other words, decisions are largely based on which group or persons wield the most power and influence in a school. Therefore, if school social workers want to influence decision-making processes in a school, they must discover which behaviors are rewarded or punished within a school, who has the ear of the school principal, who holds the most power on the school board, and how much authority the school superintendent wields.

Much of this political knowledge can be acquired through direct observation, by finding a confidante in the school who can inform the school social worker about what is going on within the school, by reading newspapers or scanning the Internet for school-related news, by attending school board meetings (or watching them on cable TV), or a combination of these.

In addition to gaining this knowledge of the political processes within a school, school social workers must also learn how to become more politically savvy. School social workers need to learn how to market themselves by "blowing their own horn," offering compelling arguments about why they are needed in the schools, and why they are indispensable.

Table 2.3 **Developing Political Savvy**

_ Rather than quietly doing their good work, school social workers must constantly "sell" themselves and "blow their own horn" since no one else will do this for them.

_ School social workers must offer compelling arguments about why they are needed by schools, what specific contributions they make to the system, why no one else can do their job, and why more of them need to be hired.

_ Having information means having power. For example, social workers should market their knowledge of community resources that can be used in support of education.

_ Since conflicts are inevitable and unavoidable in schools, school social workers should develop and "market" their expertise in conflict mediation and problem-solving skills (e.g., take a leadership role in mediating conflicts or beginning a peer mediator program).

_ School social workers can make themselves indispensable to the school by identifying needs and gaps in services and offering their expertise in addressing these needs and gaps.

_ Identify and establish relationships with powerful individuals both within and outside of school (e.g., influential business people in a community, school board members, local and state representatives) and call on these individuals for assistance when needed.

_ School social workers must choose their battles carefully. They should go for easy victories initially to build up their credibility in a school before tackling larger and more important issues later.

_ School social workers should be prepared to cite statistics and research findings that support or refute an educational issue.

_ School social workers must constantly show that their interventions result in improved educational outcomes (i.e., improvement in grades, attendance, and behavior) for students.

20-60-20 Theory of School Change

Another important "tool" for facilitating systemic change on behalf of vulnerable groups of students in schools is the 20-60-20 theory of school change. This theory is illustrated in the case vignette at the beginning of this chapter.

According to this theory, each school staff breaks down roughly into three groups. Members of the first group, comprising about 20 percent of the school staff, may be referred to as the "obstructers." This group will actively attempt to undermine any attempts to make changes in school policy, programs, or procedures and will try to discredit anyone who attempts to make any change, including school social workers. While this group is relatively small percentagewise, its members can be very vocal and they can be a destructive political force in the school. School social workers should not waste their time or energy trying to influence the obstructers. Instead, they should agree to disagree with them and focus all their efforts on the other two groups.

Members of the second group could be referred to as the "fence sitters." This group comprises the largest number of school staff, about 60 percent. Fence sitters often assume a "wait-and-see" attitude about any proposed school change. They remain neutral about any change until it is proven to them that a change is beneficial. Because of the size of this group and because this group can be won over, it is critical for school social workers to focus on this group to win support for any school change effort.

Members of the third group could be referred to as the "change agents." While this group comprises only about 20 percent of the entire school staff, members of this group can be counted

on to be very enthusiastic about attempts to change school policies, programs, or procedures that benefit the students. The change agents will be the school social worker's primary support group in bringing about systemic change in a school. For example, change agents can be used to win over the fence sitters and to neutralize the destructive efforts of the obstructers.

Chapter Three Behavioral Problems in schools

3.1. Externalizing behavioral problems

Externalizing behaviors demand the attention of educators and school social workers. These externalizing behaviors include classroom behavior problems, bullying, and peer sexual harassment.

The Nature and Extent of Classroom Behavior Problems

Classroom behavior problems include students leaving their seats, calling out, being loud or disorderly, failing to comply with teacher directions, and cheating. Needless to say, classroom behavior problems are frequent concerns of teachers, as well as students. Classroom behavior problems can result from a number of circumstances alone or in combination. For example, a student may assume the role of the "class clown" or "trouble maker" because taking on these roles in a classroom is much less stigmatizing than being the "stupid kid" who can't do his or her schoolwork. Far too often, students' classroom behavior problems are provoked or exacerbated by their interactions with peers.

A number of other situations may cause or contribute to classroom behavior problems. These include being the recipients of teachers' sarcastic and demeaning comments or low academic expectations or being so emotionally upset by difficulties or tensions at home that it is nearly impossible to concentrate on schoolwork.

Group discussion:

1. The nature of class room problems in Ethiopian schools, causes and consequences and solutions (practical cases)

The Nature and Extent of Bullying/intimidation in Schools

In addition to classroom behavior problems, bullying is another example of externalizing behavior that demands the attention of educators and school social workers. Bullying refers to unprovoked physical or psychological abuse of an individual by one student or a group of students over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse. Bullying includes direct behaviors such as teasing/ማፌዝ, taunting/ማሸማቀቅ, threatening, hitting, and stealing, as well as indirect behaviors such as causing a student to be socially isolated by spreading rumors about that student.

In USA Boys are reported to be victims of bullying at a higher rate than girls, (what about in Ethiopia?). Students are bullied at school for a variety of reasons. Girls who are viewed by their peers as physically unattractive or who do not dress stylishly are often victims of bullying. Girls who are physically well-developed or do not "fit in" in some other way are also more likely to be bullied. Boys are often victimized if they do not fit a stereotypic macho male image.

Students who have a different religion, who wear unique and unusual clothing, or who exhibit physical weaknesses and differences in appearance are also more likely to be bullied in School.

The act of bullying has both short- and long-term implications for both victims and perpetrators. Victims of chronic bullying have poorer grades and increased rates of truancy and dropping out. They may experience a loss of self-esteem and feelings of isolation that can last into adulthood. Moreover, victims of chronic bullying may push students into starting. The detrimental impact of bullying extends even beyond its victims. For example, students who witness bullying are often intimidated and fearful that it will eventually happen to them, particularly if school personnel do not act on the bullying. Witnesses to bullying may also perform poorly in the classroom because their attention is focused on how they can avoid being harmed in school rather than on their school work (Chandler, Nolin, & Davies, 1995).

Since bullying involves harassment by powerful children against children who are less powerful, rather than a conflict between peers of relatively equal status, conflict resolution strategies such as mediation may not be effective (Limber & Nation,1998). First, school social workers must make every effort, and encourage other school personnel to make similar efforts, to protect the victim from harassment. The primary response in dealing with bullies and their parents is to talk with bullies individually and tell them in absolute terms that bullying will not

be tolerated and that it will end. In working with victims of bullying and their parents, it is important to remember that the typical victim has been threatened with more bullying if he or she "tattles." Fear from such threats causes many victims to decide to suffer quietly, and they ask their parents not to contact the school.

Group discussion

1. The nature of bullying in Ethiopian schools, causes and consequences and solutions. (Mention practical cases)

The Nature and Extent of Peer Sexual Harassment in Schools

Peer sexual harassment is another serious concern facing educator sand school social workers. A major study of peer sexual harassment reported that the types of peer sexual harassment in USA ranged from nonphysical forms such as making sexual comments, spreading sexual rumors, and flashing, to physical forms such as touching, grabbing, and pinching. The most common form of harassment, reported by 65 percent of girls and 42 percent of boys, was being the target of sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks. The second most common form of harassment, reported by 65 percent of girls and 42 percent of boys, was being touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way. Girls suffer more negative effects as a result of peer sexual harassment than boys. For example, girls reported "not wanting to go to school" (33 percent), "not wanting to talk as much in class" (32 percent), and "finding it hard to pay attention in School" (28 percent) as outcomes of being sexually harassed at school.

This indifferent attitude extends to adults in schools since teachers and other school staffs rarely, if ever, intervene to stop peer sexual harassment in schools. Rather than focusing on lawsuits, Kopels and Dupper (1999) argued that interventions should be proactive and comprehensive and should "focus on the elimination of factors that contribute to a hostile school environment". These interventions should include the development of clear policies against peer sexual harassment; grievance procedures; appropriate assistance to victims; and sensitivity training for students, parents, and teachers.

Guidelines for Assessing Potentially Violent Students Given the increase in episodes of school violence in recent years, it is becoming increasingly important for school officials to be able to identify potentially violent students.

Guidelines for Assessing Potentially Violent Students

Violent Drawings or Writings: Violent students often indicate their intentions before acting violently via drawings or writings. Counselors learning of such violent drawings or writings should not easily dismiss such violent expressions. Violent poems, letters to friends, or letters to the intended victim are clear indications of violent potential. Hence, further assessment is warranted whenever a student uses age inappropriate violent drawings or writings.

Threats of Violence toward Others: Any threat of violence toward others should be immediately assessed and appropriate intervention actions should be taken to insure safety. Direct threats such as, "I'm going to kill him", "Something big is going to happen to you after school" clearly are inappropriate and warrant immediate assessment and intervention. Any threat indicated by a student whichis realistic, well planned, and highly lethal should be considered viable.

Past Violent Behaviors or Aggressive History: Students who have been violent in the past or have demonstrated aggressive behaviors toward others are at greater risk of repeating such behaviors. Thus, these students are noted as being at greater risk for future violent behaviors.

Recent Relationship Break: Students who have recently experienced a relationship break (e.g., being jilted by a girlfriend or best friend) have an increased likelihood of being violent.

Isolation: The vast majority of students who isolate themselves from peers or who appear friendless typically are not violent. However, one high-risk factor which has been strongly correlated with violent behaviors toward school peers is isolation. For this reason, students isolating themselves or reporting feelings of being isolated from others should be considered at greater risk.

Teased or Perceptions of Being Teased, Harassed, or "Picked On." Violent students often have hypersensitivity toward criticism. These students' report perceptions of being teased, harassed or being picked on by those they were violent toward. Therefore, students indicating feelings that they are being teased, harassed, or "picked on" should be assessed to determine whether or not they either intend to harm or fantasize about harming others.

Animal Torturing. There exists a high correlation between students who torture animals and violence. Students who regularly torture animals or intentionally inflict harm upon animals should be assessed for violent ideation toward others.

Substance Abuse. Although substance abuse does not cause students to be violent, students under the influence of psychoactive substances often fail to think logically and experience increased impulsivity. Thus, there exists a strong correlation between substance abuse and violent behaviors.

Familial Stressors. Familial stressors can engender feelings of frustration, anger,and hopelessness among students as well as adults.

Low School Interest. The genesis of this risk factor could come from any of a multitude of reasons which by themselves may not evoke violent behaviors. But these students may perceive themselves as belittled by those performing more favorably. Thus, when challenged to increase performance or when feeling harassed by those performing at higher levels, these students may become violent. For these reasons, this factor has been included.

Social Withdrawal. Withdrawal from peers and familial supports can indicate the student is experiencing any of a number of concerns (e.g., depression, helplessness) which warrant assessment and intervention. When combined with other risk factors, social withdrawal may signal potential violence toward others.

Noted by Peers as Being "Different." On many occasions after student violence, peers and others will note that the perpetrating student was labeled as being "different" from peers or being associated with some group. Hence, students frequently labeled by peers as being "weird," "strange," "geeky," and so on maybe at increased risk for violent behaviors.

Group discussion

1. The nature of peer sexual harassment in Ethiopian schools, causes and consequences and solutions. (Mention practical cases)

Proven Student-Focused Interventions/Programs That Focus on Externalizing Behavior Problems

Cognitive-behavioral (C-B) interventions have been shown to be particularly effective in minimizing externalizing behavior problems in school settings. Elliott (1998) concluded that cognitive-behavioral approaches are generally effective while supportive or insight-oriented programs like psychotherapy and intensive casework approaches are generally ineffective.

C-B interventions:

1. Address the sequence of interactions as well as the role of cognitive distortions that result in the misbehavior

2. Focus on the development of social competence, such asthe ability to get along with others and cope with problems in an empathic and considerate manner

C-B interventions focus on the relationship between an individual's beliefs, expectancies, perceptions, and attributions about himself or herself, as well as on that individual's feelings and behavior. These interventions consider the influence of others in the environment on the individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and are, therefore, congruent with the ecological perspective.

School Survival Group

The school survival group is for middle/junior high school students with school behavior problems. The school survival group is based on several tenets of social cognitive theory. According to this theory, all human beings are doing the best that they can, given what they know about themselves and their world; all behavior is the result of people's best effort to interpret events and solve problems as they interact with their environment (Brower & Nurius, 1993). The primary goal of the school survival group is to increase participant's conscious awareness of the distorted social cognitions that underlie their unproductive school behavior.

This group treatment program focuses on changing students' perceptions about the amount of personal control they have over their school behavior. The notion of choice is emphasized throughout the group sessions. Group members learn that there are a number of ways they can respond to conflictual situations involving peers and adults at school and that the ways in which they respond result in certain consequences, both positive and negative. It is emphasized that students, given their relatively low status in the school, will always "lose" if they engage in power struggles with teachers and school administrators. Consequently, group members are taught to think before they act. They also learn to recognize and label feelings and to recognize the difference between having feelings and acting on feelings.

Each of the 10 group sessions is highly structured with specific content to be taught and discussed. The groups meet once a week for 40 to 50 minutes over a period of 10 consecutive weeks. The first phase of the school survival group, sessions1 through 5, focuses on increasing students' cognitive awareness of unproductive ways of thinking and acting in conflictual school situations. To accomplish this, group members are taught the transactional analysis (TA) concepts of "life scripts," "games," and "ego states" and the Adlerian goals of misbehavior (i.e., attention, power, revenge, to be left alone, and excitement). These concepts are especially helpful

because they are easy to understand and they provide a means for analyzing destructive communication patterns. It is assumed that once group members understand the patterns and motivations underlying their thoughts and behaviors, they will feel empowered to change their unproductive ways of thinking and behaving.

The second phase of this group, sessions 6 and 7, focuses on learning and implementing a structured problem-solving process that emphasizes choices and options. The third and final phase of this group, sessions 8 through 10, focuses on the acquisition of specific school survival skills. A number of role plays are used to model how to work through conflictual situations involving peers or adults in schools. Group members are also given homework (e.g., completion of a self-monitoring checklist) to complete between group sessions.

It was discovered that students who participated in this group reported a shift from a more external to a more internal locus of control. This finding is important because a shift to a More internal locus of control has been shown to be positively correlated with school success in other studies.

Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS)

One of the best-known cognitive-behavioral programs is Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS). Also known as "I Can Problem Solve," ICPS is a 12-week interpersonal cognitive problem-solving program designed for children from preschool to sixth grade. ICPS uses games, didactic discussion, and group interaction techniques to teach children communication and decision-making skills. the program consists of eight weeks of daily 20-minute lessons combined with teacher (or parent) training in "problem-solving dialoguing," an informal style of communication meant to foster the exercise of newly learned problem-solving skills. The core skills of ICPS are the ability to generate multiple solutions to interpersonal problems, the ability to consider consequences to decisions or actions, and the ability to consider others' perspectives as a consideration in decision making. ICPS has been widely replicated, and several independent studies have supported the cognitive and behavioral gains of students trained in the curriculum reports that ICPS is effective in reducing children's impulsiveness and disruptiveness and in increasing their cooperativeness and pro social behaviors in the classroom, at home, and with peers.

The Second Step curriculum consists of 30 lessons, 35 minutes each, taught once or twice per week in a classroom setting. Lessons consist of photograph lesson cards accompanied by a scenario that forms the basis for discussion and role plays.

Second Step is currently being implemented in more than 10,000schools in the United States and Canada (Portner, 1997).

Multi systemic Therapy (MST)

Multi systemic Therapy (MST) is an intensive family- and community based treatment that addresses the known causes of serious antisocial behaviors in youth and their families.

The MST approach is significantly different from more traditional strategies developed to treat serious antisocial behavior in adolescents' because MST "focuses first on improving psychosocial functioning for youth and their families so that the need for out-of-home child placements is reduced or eliminated". The goal of the MST approach is to provide an integrative, cost-effective family-based treatment that results in positive outcomes for adolescents who demonstrate serious antisocial behavior. It accomplishes this goal by treating those factors in the youth's environment that are contributing to his or her behavior problems. These factors may include individual characteristics (e.g., poor problem-solving skills), family relations (e.g., inept discipline), peer relations (e.g., association with deviant peers), and school performance (e.g., academic difficulties). MST measures success "in terms of reduced recidivism rates among participating youth, improved family andpeer relations, decreased behavioral problems, and decreased rates of out-of-home placements". Research has shown that MST is more effective to treat juvenile offenders.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS)

The Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum

Positive Adolescents Choices Training (PACT)

Positive Adolescents Choices Training (PACT) is "unique in that it is culturally relevant and aimed at reducing aggression and victimization in high-risk youths".

PACT targets high-risk youth between the age's of12 and 16 who have serious behavior problems or have a history of violence, victimization, or exposure to violence.

PACT teaches skills in the areas of giving constructive criticism, receiving negative feedback, and negotiating in lessons that are delivered one or more times a week for19 weeks to groups of

no more than 10 students. PACT was found to be effective in improving participants' ability to provide negative feedback and in significantly reducing physical aggression in school.

Rather than isolating students for punishment, the most effective in-school suspension programs include counseling components, conflict resolution strategies, and computer tutorial programs. Conflict resolution and mediation programs have also been shown to be effective in resolving the inevitable conflicts that emerge among peers in schools. The essence of conflict resolution and mediation programs is to "teach students to listen carefully and respectfully to another person's point of view, accept that there are meaningful differences, and develop creative, mutually satisfactory solutions". Peer mediation relies on an impartial third party to help students use problem-solving steps to negotiate and reach a mutually beneficial agreement.

Peer mediators are usually nominated by peers or teachers because they are respected and trusted by their peers and have demonstrated leadership and communication skills.

Conflict resolution and mediation programs have also been shown to significantly reduce the number of school suspensions for fighting and to improve students' ability to manage conflicts.

Another student-focused intervention that has been shown to be effective in dealing with students with behavioral problems are school-based mentoring programs. School-based mentoring is one of the most promising and rapidly expanding approaches to mentoring. The goal of successful mentoring programs is the formation of an ongoing, one-on-one relationship with a caring adult that will benefit the younger person. To facilitate the building of strong relationships with adult role models, schools must recruit adults as mentors/advocates/tutors for students with behavior problems.

Mentors may be recruited formally or informally from corporations or local businesses, professional organizations, faith communities, law enforcement, college faculties, or retirement communities. Teachers and counselors can also be assigned as mentors to students.

School social workers can assume a number of roles and tasks in implementing any of the programs and interventions discussed in this chapter. As advocates, school social workers must inform school officials about the detrimental impact of exclusionary policies and practices, such as suspension and expulsion, and encourage school boards to implement proven or promising alternatives to suspension and expulsion, particularly targeting disadvantaged and culturally diverse students.

School social workers, in collaboration with other professionals, may also find it necessary to write grants to fund new programs. School social workers may also be indirectly involved by providing ongoing consultation and guidance to teachers or other school professionals involved in the delivery of the program.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERNALIZING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Introduction

While school officials focus most of their attention on students with acting out or externalizing behavior problems, many students "suffer quietly" in our schools with little or no assistance.

Anxiety and Fearfulness

Today's preteens and teens (age 13-19) exhibit a higher level of anxiety compared to children treated for psychiatric disorders 50 years ago (Twenge, 2000). Anxiety impacts students' physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual health. A number of factors may cause or exacerbate anxiety in students including illness, injury, inadequate nutrition, and low levels of physical fitness, dysfunctional family lives, and an inability to find purpose in life or to

Many children in school are anxious about home problems, and this anxiety is exacerbated by pressures in school. School conditions that may contribute to anxiety in students include being asked to answer academic questions, being asked to perform in public, engaging in activities that they know will be evaluated, changing schools or changing classes, pressures to excel in extracurricular activities, peer pressure, school size, lighting, temperature and ventilation, noise, crowding, sanitation and cleanliness, accessibility, and the personality and behavior of a teacher (Massey, 1998).

While many children experience some anxiety, an estimated1 percent of all school-age children suffer from a type of anxiety that is largely irrational and out of proportion to the threat. These children are labeled "school phobic", all school phobias have the following basic characteristics: severe difficulty attending school; severe emotional upset including feeling ill

when faced with the prospect of going to school; staying home from school with the parent's knowledge; and the absence of antisocial behaviors such as stealing, lying, and destructiveness.

A number of parent and teacher rating scales and checklists have been developed to help school social workers and other school professionals determine if a child's anxiety and fear are part of normal development or if an intervention is needed.

The most frequently used instruments are Achenbach's Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1979), the Behavior Problems Checklist(Quay & Peterson, 1983), the Fear Survey Schedule for Children(Ollendick, 1983), the Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (Reynolds& Richmond, 1978), the Test Anxiety Scale for Children (Sarason, Davidson, Lighhall, & Waite, 1958), and the Preschool ObservationScale of Anxiety (Glennon & Weisz, 1978).

The Preschool Observation Scale of Anxiety helps in determining the conditions thatcontribute to fear and anxiety.

Loneliness/Shyness

Numbers of students experience feelings of loneliness that often result in poor peer relationships or exclusion from peers. As a result of these poor peer relationships, lonely children may miss out on many opportunities to interact with peers and learn important lifelong skills; they may also be at increased risk for later problems (Bullock, 1998). Bullying and other forms of peer harassment may lead to feelings of loneliness.

Closely related to lonely students are those who are shy and withdrawn. Many relatively quiet students are well-adjusted academically and socially and content to work independently.

Shyness becomes problematic when it leads to a pattern of behavior that includes a reluctance to enter social situations, discomfort and inhibition in the presence of others, exaggerated self-concern, unresponsiveness, an increasingly negative social self-concept, or a combination of these (Honig, 1987; Thompson& Rudolph, 1992). Bullock (1998) described a number of factors that may contribute to feelings of loneliness and problematic shyness in young children including: moving to a new school or neighborhood, losing a friend, losing an object or possession, experiencing the divorce of parents, experiencing the death of apet or significant person, being rejected by peers, lacking the social skills to make friends, or possessing personal characteristics(e.g., shyness, anxiety, and low self-esteem) that contribute to difficulties in making friends.

Grieving

Death is a part of life and children will experience the deaths of loved ones, including pets, through illness or accidents. Separation from loved ones in any form results in grieving. Children who have suffered a loss often have difficulty coping with the school environment and may exhibit the following symptoms: a lack of concentration, an inability to complete tasks, fatigue, excessive displays of emotion, or a combination of these.

Several standardized instruments have been developed to measure grief responses in children and adolescents. The Hogan Parent /Sibling Inventory of Bereavement (HSIB) is the preeminent grief instrument for adolescents. It has also been successfully applied to assessing aspects of children's grief. The Loss Response List measures physical, emotional, social, and cognitive responses to grief. N. B. Webb (1993) developed a comprehensive assessment for working with bereaved children that includes the following three categories of factors:

1. Individual factors (age, developmental stage, cognitive functioning, and temperamental factors, past coping behaviors).
2. Death-related factors (type of death, contact with the deceased, expression of farewell, relationship to deceased, grief reactions).
3. Family/social/religious/cultural factors. School social workers and other school professionals give students the opportunity to grieve their losses; they also work to create a school climate that is sensitive to the significant number of children experiencing loss on a regular basis.

Depression and Suicide

Epidemiological studies have reported that up to 2.5 percent of children and up to 8.3 percent of adolescents in the United States suffer from depression. It also appears that depression is occurring earlier in life today than in past decades and that early onset depression often persists, recurs, and continues into adulthood. In childhood, boys and girls appear to be at equal risk for depressive disorders; but during adolescence, girls are twice as likely as boys to develop depression (Birmaher et al., 1996).

Children who develop major depression are more likely to have a family history of the disorder; they often have a parent who experienced depression at an early age. Depression in young people often co-occurs with anxiety, disruptive behavior, or substance abuse disorders, and with physical illnesses, such as diabetes. Depression in adolescents is of particular concern because clinically depressed adolescents are five times more likely to attempt suicide that their

non-depressed peers. Depressed adolescents are also at increased risk for substance abuse and suicidal behavior.

Suicide is now the second leading cause of death among youths 15 to 19 years of age and the third leading cause of death among youths 15 to 24 years of age. While teenage girls attempt suicide three times as often as boys, males are four times more likely to be successful in their attempts. Thirty percent of all attempted or completed youth suicides are related to issues of sexual identity; gay and lesbian youth are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than other youth ("Surgeon General'sCall To Action," 1999).

What factors account for this escalating rate of suicide among our youth? Sociologists and mental health experts point to a tangled web of cultural, psychological, and medical factors. These factors include a general sense of isolation and alienation from caring adults both at home and at school, a high divorce rate, parental abuse, and poor impulse control stemming from exposure to television, the lack of access to mental health services, and the ready availability of handguns. According to the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are also plays a significant role.

Because depression in children and adolescents is associated with an increased risk of suicidal behaviors, it is essential that school social workers and other school professionals' be alert to the symptoms of depression in children and adolescents. The length and severity of any one or combination of symptoms is a critical factor in assessing childhood and adolescent depression.

Several standardized assessment tools have been designed to screen children and adolescents for possible depression. The Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) assesses symptoms of depression in children ages 8 to 17 years. The Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) Scale assess symptoms of depression in adolescents.

Signs That May Be Associated with Depression

Young children

_ pretending to be sick.

_ Over activity.

_ Clinging to parents and refusing to go to school.

_ Worrying that parents may die.

Older children and teenagers

_ Sulking.

_ refusing to participate in family and social activities.

_ Getting into trouble at school.

_ Using alcohol or other drugs.

_ Stop paying attention to their appearance.

_ Becoming negative, restless, grouchy, aggressive, or feeling that no oneunderstands them.

Proven or Promising Student-Focused Interventions Designed toAddress Internalizing Behavior Problems

1. One of the oldest and most respected school-based programs designed to identify and intervene with children who are at-risk for emotional and behavioral problems is the Primary Mental Health Prevention (PMHP) project (Cowen et al., 1996).

Anxiety and Fearfulness

Several cognitive-behavioral (C-B) procedures (i.e., modeling, systematic desensitization, and flooding and implosive therapy) have been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety and fearin children and adolescents. All of these C-B procedures focuses on helping students develop specific thinking skills and apply those skills whenever confronted with a particular feared stimulusevent or object (Morris & Kratochwill, 1985).

According to King and Ollendick (1989), **modeling** entails demonstrating non fearful behavior in anxiety-producing situations and desired responses for handling the feared stimuli. **Systematic desensitization** consists of progressive relaxation training, the development of a hierarchy of fear-producing stimulus, and the systematic pairing of items that are feared with relaxation techniques (King & Ollendick, 1989). According to Morris and Kratoch will, flooding and implosive therapy call for a prolonged exposure to the most anxiety-evoking stimuli.

One program developed specifically to reduce anxiety in children shows promise. The Queensland Early Intervention and Prevention of Anxiety Project is designed to "prevent the onset and development of anxiety problems in children by teaching them to utilize cognitive, behavioral, and physiological coping strategies while exposing them to increasingly fearful situations. The program is primarily focused on the individual child but includes three sessions with parents". A large-scale, longitudinal evaluation of the Queens land Early Intervention and Prevention of Anxiety Project found that anxious but no disordered students who received this

program had developed significantly fewer internalizing disorders compared to controls at six-month post intervention.

Another program that shows promise is Stress Inoculation Training I. This 13-session school-based program is designed to reduce "negative emotional arousal" and other psychological problems associated with stress by using cognitive restructuring, problem solving, and anxiety management.

Loneliness/Shyness

Research that supports specific practices to assist lonely and shy children in school is weak (Brophy, 1996). However, numberof researchers have generated lists of several very practical strategies that can be used to help shy students. Most of these strategies are best carried out by teachers. However, several strategies can be implemented by school social workers, including role playing where children are asked to interact with others in social situations in which they might otherwise be shy, and by using bibliotherapy materials.

Grief

McGlauflin (1998) offers a list of recommendations for school professionals to help individual students, as well as to integrate the grief process into the entire school (see Table 4.4). One of the recommendations calls for a school social worker or other school professional to share an empathic statement with a child who has experienced a death or loss soon after his or her return to school.

Strategies for Helping Shy or Withdrawn Students

_ Use interest inventories to determine interests of shy students then follow up by using these interests as bases for conversations or learning activities.

_ Display their (good) artwork or assignments for others to see in the classroom.

_ Assign them as a partner to, or promote their friendship with, a classmate who is popular and engages in frequent contact with peers.

_ Check with these students frequently if they are prone to daydreaming.

_ Help shy children set social development goals and assist them by providing training in assertiveness, initiating interactions with peers, or other social skills.

_ Provide them with information needed to develop social insight (e.g., explaining that new students often have trouble making friends at first, or that teasing does not necessarily mean that

peers do not like you), suggesting ways for them to initiate productive peer contacts or to respond more effectively to peer initiations.

_ Provide them with a designated role that will give them something to do and cause them to interact with others in social situations in which they might otherwise become shy and retreat to the fringes of the group.

_ Teach them social "door openers" for greeting others and speaking to them in person or on the telephone, especially assertive requests ("Can I play, too?").

_ Make time to talk with them each day, even if just for a few minutes, and listen carefully and respond specifically to what they tell you.

Recommendations for Integrating the Grief Process into the School Setting

Look at grieving as a valuable life skill. Learning to grieve the many losses that persons inevitably face throughout life is a valuable life skill. Using historic occasions such as Veteran's Day to discuss death can become "teachable moments" when classes can learn about grieving and its importance in life.

Learn to recognize opportunities. School social workers and other school professionals can create a "memorial" bulletin board to remember anniversaries of importance to individuals or the school community. Other grief opportunities are more spontaneous, such as times when children and adults make comments about people who have died, about changes in their lives, or express their yearnings for a better time. Responding with acceptance by saying "you still think of your dad a lot" or "it is still hard getting used to all the changes" can be a great relief to a griever.

Respect the consciousness of grief. Bereavement is a time of disorientation and Avery different consciousness than people normally maintain one that should be treated with gentleness and respect. This means accepting random thoughts that may seem unrelated to present reality, expecting silly mistakes, and allowing sudden shows of emotion. Communicating that all these responses are normal and to be expected is tremendously supportive.

Speak from a place of compassion, not pity. To create a climate of emotional safety in a school, staff and children should reach out to one another with compassion—a deep understanding between equals. While it is common for caring people to pity a grieving person, especially a grieving child, pity often feels condescending and removed.

Do not be afraid to show emotion. Showing and sharing emotion are the greatest gifts one person can give another. While it may be uncomfortable, it is a meaningful and human time.

Offer children outlets for their grief. For example, teachers and other school professionals might allow journal writing about loss; allow students to do a research topic pertinent to their losses (e.g., looking up a disease); create a "special area" in a room where a child can go for a predetermined period of time if needed; and/or encourage expression through painting, drawing, dancing, and so forth.

Honor every possible goodbye in the school. Usually people hope to leave without saying goodbye in order to avoid pain. Ironically, people still experience the pain of separation but experience it alone. Perhaps the best grief education a school can do is to honor all good-byes that occur during the year—students leaving, changing grades, pets dying, family changes, and losing friends. By acknowledging the importance of every good-bye (creating ceremonies for transitions, writing a good-bye song when there is a loss, attending memorial services), the school community acknowledges the process of grief in all aspects of life.

Speak to children about death or loss. When a student has experienced a loss, a school professional should speak to him or her soon after his or her return to school. This may seem obvious but there are times when a child returns to school after a loss and no one mentions it for fear of saying the "wrong" thing. A comment can simply be "I was sad to hear your brother died,; this must be a hard time for you." Even if a child does not immediately respond, it is still very important that an empathic statement be shared.

Be as honest as possible. Being as honest as possible means that school professionals should share what they know, what they do not know, and what they are not able to discuss, and why. This honesty respects both the children's need to know and the school's valid limitations.

Continue with the routines, discipline, and high expectations. For many grieving students, school may be the most stable and predictable place in their lives. While schools can communicate respect for the grieving process by making allowances, grieving students benefit from functioning as normally as possible and by having limits placed on inappropriate behavior.

Never forget about a loss, even years later. Losses are part of the fabric of each person's identity. To remember the anniversary of a death or divorce, to remember a quality of a person who died, or the love a child had for a pet is to continue to honor those relationships.

Support one another. Supporting healthy grief in a school is not easy work. It is natural to be deeply moved, deeply saddened, and heavy of heart after being with a grieving child. Ideally, each school professional should have at least one other person he or she can look to for on-going

support—this will greatly enhance the warmth and empathy that school professionals can offer grieving children.

Depression and Suicide

Research indicates that certain types of short-term psychotherapy, particularly cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), can help relieve depression in children and adolescents.

One school-based program, the Suicide Prevention Program, uses a cognitive-behavioral approach to teach students how tothink about stress and distress, to provide them with coping and problem-solving skills, and to help them identify and use a peer support network (Greenberg et al., 2000).

According to Greenberg et al., the Suicide Prevention Program consists of seven distinct topical units based on three phases: an educational conceptual phase, an exercise-training phase, and an implementation-application phase.

To address this problem, school social workers should take several additional steps. Because students may be the individuals who possess the most intimate knowledge about their peers, school social workers should make sure that all students are educated about the risk factors for adolescent suicide and receive instruction on the importance of sharing this information with the school social worker or counselor if they suspect that a friend may be at risk. The importance of peers' sharing this information with an adult in school cannot be overemphasized.

If a suicide does occur, school social workers can initiate several steps to minimize problems and "copycat" suicides. First, schools should construct a "calling tree" immediately to spread the news to school staff and parents of friends of the deceased. Next, a school professional should be assigned to talk to students, to call the family to offer assistance, and to keep the principal and superintendent informed. It is also important to not glamorize the act by constructing shrines for the dead, as well as to minimize exposure to media reports about the suicide (Portner, 2000a).

Summary

Many students who are anxious, fearful, lonely, shy, grieving, or depressed are underserved or not served at all in our schools. A number of standardized instruments have been developed to assess these problems. Several cognitive-behavioral (C-B) techniques (e.g., modeling, systematic desensitization, flooding and implosive therapy) have been shown to be effective in reducing anxiety, fear, and depression in children and adolescents. One of the oldest and most respected school-based programs designed to identify and intervene with children who are at-risk for

emotional and behavioral problems is the Primary Mental Health Prevention (PMHP) project. School social workers should be aware of a number of proven or promising student-focused interventions that have been developed to address these internalizing behaviors and advocate their implementation in schools.

Chapter 5 Social Problems

Introduction

Social problems do not stop at the schoolhouse door. Social problems will impact, to a greater or lesser extent, a child's academic performance and behavior in school. For example, a homeless child may not be able to study or sleep while residing in the chaotic environment of a homeless shelter. Foster children may have to adjust to frequent school changes, and they may fear school and anticipate failure. An abused child may be depressed and may have a difficult time interacting with his or her peers in school. While some social problems are highly correlated with income and ethnicity, others cut across all income levels and ethnic groups.

1. **Truancy**

Truancy is a critical problem in many schools, In addition to being detrimental to students' academic progress, promotion, graduation, self-esteem, and employment potential (DeKalb, 1999), truancy is one of the most powerful predictors of delinquency.

Ingersoll and LeBoeuf (1997) discussed a wide variety of reasons that may explain why students are truant from school. Students may fear becoming victims of school violence, they may be bored with the way teachers present the curriculum, or they may become discouraged by constantly having to struggle to keep up with their peers academically. Some youth miss school because they have to take care of younger siblings. Some students stop coming to school because every time they return to school, they are suspended for interpersonal problems with their teachers or peers. Some students do not attend school because their parents neglect their educational needs while other children are school phobic and cannot function outside the security of their home.

2. **Dropouts/Pushouts**

Despite the increased importance of a high school education in an increasingly technological society, the high school completion rate has shown limited gains over the past 25 years. The dropout rate in large urban districts remains particularly high. The social and personal costs of dropping out of school are staggering. Dropouts comprise nearly half of the heads of house e hold son welfare and a similar percentage of the prison population (Schwartz, 1995a). Dropping out also leads to increased health care costs and lowered tax revenues.

Interviews with dropouts have uncovered a variety of reasons for leaving school early. Several reasons such as a number of personal factors, such as getting pregnant, getting a job, or having a drug or alcohol problem, were mentioned. However, a number of school factors such as not getting along with teachers or peers, a lack of academic assistance due to large classes, or the humiliation of repeating classes were also mentioned. Also reported were having disciplinary problems, being suspended, or expelled. Suspension and expulsion are especially problematic because many students are suspended for relatively minor offenses.

These findings call into question the use of the term dropout for early school leavers who are continually suspended from school. A more accurate term for this subcategory of early school leavers should be push outs rather than dropouts. While the term dropout connotes individual dysfunction and pathology, the term push out focuses attention on those school conditions that may exacerbate or even cause youth to leave school prior to graduation (Dupper, 1994b).

Despite the fact that some youth leave school as a result of entirely personal factors, school social workers must be careful not to limit their conceptualization of the dropout problem to personal factors alone. By broadening their conceptualization of early school leavers to include push outs as well as dropouts, school social workers are able to focus their attention on detrimental school factors (e.g., overly harsh and discriminatory school discipline policies and procedures)in assessing and developing interventions to address the dropout/push out problem.

Dropouts' Reasons for Leaving School Early

1. **School factors**: Impersonal schools, Poor preparation for high school, Classes were too large, Humiliation of repeating classes and being surrounded by younger students, Received failing, poor grades, or couldn't keep up with schoolwork, Didn't get along with teachers and/or students, Had disciplinary problems, was suspended or expelled.,

Didn't fit in, Didn't feel safe, Not enrolled in a college preparatory program, Missed at least 10 days of school or cut class at least 10times.

2. **Personal factors**: Got a job, had a family to support, or had trouble managing both school and work, Got married, became pregnant or became a parent, wanted, to have a family, or had a family to take care of., Family conflict, Had friends who dropped out, Wanted to travel, Had a drug or alcohol problem, Believed that they didn't have control over their lives, that chance and luck were important, and that something always seemed to stop them from getting ahead, Felt "useless at times," "no good at all," and/or "didn't have much to be proud of."

3. Homelessness

a homeless person is "any individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or has a primary nighttime residence that is a publicly operated shelter, an institution providing temporary shelter, or a public or private place not designed for the accommodation of human beings." This last category includes cars and park benches.

A study of the educational problems of homeless children and youth revealed that the most immediate concerns to school social workers and educators are a number of barriers that preclude homeless children and youth from even enrolling in school. These barriers include guardianship requirements, delays in transfer of school records, lack of a permanent address, immunization records, or a combination of these. Often, homeless children and youth who are able to enroll in school cannot attend school because homeless families may not have a family car or money for public transportation, and many shelters are unable to provide transportation.

Other school-related problems facing homeless children include a chaotic shelter environment that is not conducive to studying or sleeping; limited educational resources available for homeless children, disproportionately high levels of depression and developmental delays, taunting by classmates and teachers once their homelessness is known; feelings of shame, embarrassment, humiliation about being homeless; and problems in evaluating homeless children for special education services.

4. Foster Care

Nearly all foster children have suffered traumatic experiences and many have had multiple homes. Similar to homeless children, foster children must face frequent school changes and adjust repeatedly to different educational expectations, curricula, and educators. Foster children

may be truant because they fear school and anticipate failure or because their biological parents did not enforce attendance. Foster children may not care about schoolwork because it seems inconsequential in comparison with their other problems such as abuse and neglect and other turmoil in their lives.

A major obstacle in meeting the educational needs of children and youth in foster care is the lack of collaboration between school personnel and the child welfare system. According to Schwartz, foster parents also face a number of challenges. They must address their children's many needs without adequate preparation or training, they must conform to the demands of a social welfare system that provides too little money and support, and they must live with the fact that the children may leave at any time.

5. Abuse and Neglect

According to a report of the Surgeon General (1999), physical and sexual abuse is associated with a host of mental health problems including insecure attachment, posttraumatic stress disorder, and conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD), depression, and impaired social functioning with peers. Psychological maltreatment is believed to occur more frequently than physical abuse. Children who are abused may experience a broad array of adverse short- and long-term mental health difficulties depending on the child's developmental level, the context of the abuse (including the perpetrator's use of force, threats, and weapons), the duration and frequency of abuse, or the extent of parental support upon disclosure.

School social workers play a key role in informing school personnel about the signs and symptoms of physical and sexual abuse. In addition to physical abuse, teachers and school personnel should also be made aware of the "soft" sign indicators of child sexual abuse. For the "soft" as well as physical indicators of child sexual abuse, it is important to note that just because a child exhibits some of the symptoms outlined in this table, school social workers and educators must not automatically jump to the conclusion that the child is being physically or sexually abused. Often signs are ambiguous and other stressors in a child's life can produce similar symptoms.

In addition to failing to recognize the signs and symptoms of physical and sexual abuse, several other factors may affect the reporting of child abuse in schools. Teachers may be unaware of the fact that if they make a report in "good faith, "they have immunity from civil or criminal liability. The reporting philosophy of the school principal may also exert an important

influence on teacher reporting of child abuse. For example, if a principal encourages it, teachers are more likely to report; when principals are reluctant to report in an effort to maintain good parental relations and school image, teachers report abuse less often. It is essential that school social workers make teachers and other school personnel aware of the fact that, despite the reporting philosophy of the principal, adults are required by law in all 50 states to report suspected child abuse.

6. Divorce and Separation

Children are increasingly likely to have single mothers, unmarried couples, and grandparents as caretakers. This trend is troublesome because research indicates that children who grow up without a father present, even when adjustments are made for income, are more likely to suffer a wide variety of other disorders including anxiety, peer conflict, hyperactivity; are 75 percent more likely to need professional assistance for emotional problems; and are twice as likely to repeat a grade of school.

Increasing numbers of grandparents are assuming the role of surrogate parents to their grandchildren with more than 2million taking on this responsibility. Reasons behind this trend include the death of one or both parents, parental abandonment, and divorce, an increase in the number of unmarried mothers, drug addiction, mental illness, or parental imprisonment.

7. Substance Abuse

In addition to the health concerns over smoking cigarettes, there is a correlation between smoking cigarettes and alcohol and substance abuse. Specifically, youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years old who smoked were 9 times as likely to use illicit drugs and 16 times as likely to drink heavily as compared to nonsmoking youth.

8. Teen Sexual Behavior/Pregnancy/Parenthood

Approximately one million American teenage girls become pregnant each year with 78 percent of these pregnancies unintended. The negative consequences of teenage pregnancy and childbearing impact both the mother and child. For example, teen mothers are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to live in poverty and to rely on welfare than their peers who delay childbearing. The children of teenage mothers are often born at low birth weight; experience health and developmental problems; and are frequently poor, abused,

neglected, or a combination of these. Furthermore, teenage pregnancy poses a substantial financial burden to society. It is important to target young men in reducing teenage pregnancy since teen fatherhood has-been shown to be associated with engaging in delinquent and other problem behaviors.

Discussion

1. **Explain the extent of each problems in Ethiopian schools**
2. **Discuss the solutions and social work intervention strategies to alleviate the problems.**

Chapter six: School-Based Prevention Programs

School-Based Prevention Programs

- Exemplary school-based prevention programs.
- Programs for prevention of violence.
- Programs for prevention of bullying.
- Programs for prevention of substance abuse.
- Programs for prevention of truancy.
- Programs for prevention of sexual abuse.
- Programs for prevention of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease.
- Innovative programs designed to transform schools.

Introduction

As more federal and state funds are directed at prevention programs rooted in scientific research, schools will turn increasingly to those professionals, including school social workers, with expertise to prevent problems commonly found in school settings today.

Several decades of prevention research has greatly expanded the knowledge base of "what works" in school-based programs (Sloboda & David, 1997) and yielded those essential elements found in successful school-based prevention programs The most successful school-based prevention programs do more than reach the individual child; they also seek to change the total

school environment. Individual-change strategies use experiential techniques rather than a lecture format, and school-change strategies are designed to impact the culture and climate of the

Essential Elements Employed in Successful School-Based Prevention Programs

■ Includes both individual-change and school-change strategies.

■ Individual-change strategies attempt to develop social competence by changing students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors by using interactive teaching techniques (e.g., role plays and practice with peers) rather than lectures or one-way communications.

■ School-change strategies include programs aimed at changing the culture of the school and clarifying and communicating behavioral norms (e.g., the use of alcohol and drugs is not the norm for teenagers).

■ Individual-change and school-change strategies consist of multiple years of intervention using a well-tested, standardized intervention with detailed lesson plans and student materials.

This chapter provides an overview of a number of proven or promising school-based prevention programs that employ both individual- and school-change strategies. Included are programs designed to prevent violence, bullying, substance abuse, truancy, sexual abuse, and teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. In addition, this chapter highlights several innovative programs designed to transform schools to "reach out" rather than "push out" at-risk students (Civil Rights Project, 2000).

Exemplary School-Based Prevention Programs

Each of the school-based prevention programs described in this reflects these essential elements of successful school-based prevention programs. The primary criterion for inclusion was strong empirical support. For example, a number of these programs rank among the top 50 percent in terms of strong program effects by at least one of three groups of researchers (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1999), several have been named exemplary or promising programs by the U.S. Department of Education's Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools, while others have been named blueprint programs by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder because they met a very high scientific

standard of program effectiveness and provided a nucleus for a national violence prevention initiative. For more specific information on the methodology used (e.g., sample size, ethnicity of participants) to determine the effectiveness of individual programs, refer to the original source cited for each program. Contact information for many of the school-based prevention programs discussed

Programs for Prevention of Violence

Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program

Resolving Conflicts Creatively Program (RCCP) is the most extensively researched school-based violence prevention program and is widely regarded by public health experts as one of the most promising violence prevention programs in operation today (DeJong, 1999). According to DeJong, the goal of RCCP is to create school change so that students have a safe environment in which to explore peaceful ways of resolving conflict. RCCP is based on the assumption that students who engage in violent acts often do not know how to manage conflict in their lives, and conflict education is important because it provides youth with tools to deal with the inevitable daily conflicts that can result in violent behaviors. The primary objectives of the RCCP are to achieve a long-term reduction in violence and violence-related behavior, promote cooperative behavior among students and adults, and promote intercultural understanding and positive.

Relations, and promote greater student academic achievement and a reduction in the absentee rates for both students and teachers (Aber, Brown, Chaudry, Jones, & Samples, 1996). An evaluation of RCCP found that almost 71 percent of responding teachers observed students demonstrating less physical violence in the classroom to a moderate or great extent, and almost 72 percent of responding teachers observed that students have increased skills in understanding others' points of view (Metis Associates, Inc., 1990).

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) is a multi com-ponent program that targets the individual child, school, classroom, peer group, and home to reduce the antecedents for conduct disorder (Greenberg et al., 2000, p. 108). LIFT is a 10-week intervention consisting of parent training, a classroom-based social skills program, a playground behavioral program, and routine school-parent communication. According to Greenberg et al., the school component consists of 20, one-hour sessions provided over a 10-week period. The school component includes:

1. Developmentally appropriate classroom instruction on social and problem-solving skills.
2. Opportunities to practice social and problem-solving skills in large and small group settings.
3. Free play in the context of a group cooperation game (adapted from the Good Behavior Game; see Chapter 9).
4. Skills review and presentation of rewards.

The school-parent communication component consists of a telephone and answering machine for each classroom on which teachers leave daily messages about class activities, homework assignments, and special events. Parents may call to hear these messages. Additionally, a parent intervention focuses on teaching parents how to create and sustain a home environment marked by consistent and effective discipline practices and close supervision. LIFT has been shown to "virtually stop aggressive behavior" in elementary school children (see Reid, Eddy, & Fetrow, 1999).

Metropolitan Area Child Study

Metropolitan Area Child Study (MACS) "seeks to affect the child's thinking and behavior, while also affecting the major influences on development According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (1999), MACS is designed to be implemented in elementary schools with one version designed for second and third grades and one version designed for fifth and sixth grades. The most basic program, implemented for 20 weeks over two years, combines teacher training in classroom behavior management and instructional techniques with a classroom-based social-skills, social problem-solving curriculum. A 20-session, small group component for children at high risk for aggression can be added on a weekly basis for between six and eight children. A third component that involves families in 22 weekly meetings can also be added.

MACS has been carefully and extensively evaluated using a multiethnic, economically disadvantaged population. The full/integrated program has been shown to be effective in "reducing aggression, improving academic functioning, and lessening rates of later delinquency"

Teaching Students to be Peacemakers

Teaching Students to be Peacemakers is described as a peer mediation and school discipline program that teaches students how to resolve disagreements peacefully (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1999). Students in the Teaching Students to be Peacemakers program are "taught what is and what is not a conflict, how to mediate schoolmates' conflicts, and how to negotiate agreements" .Students learn six-step negotiation procedures and four-step mediation procedures. "Evaluators observed a 63 percent reduction in antisocial and violent behaviors in students who participated in this program compared to students who did not participate

Programs for Prevention of Bullying

Bullying Prevention Program

The Bullying Prevention Program is the first and best-known intervention that specifically targets bullying in schools. It has been designated as a model blueprint program by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, Institute of Behavioral Science, at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The Bullying Prevention Program is described as a comprehensive prevention program consisting of school wide interventions, classroom-level interventions, and individual-level interventions (Limber & Nation, 1998). According to Olweus (1993), the Bullying Prevention Program, implemented in Norway and Sweden in the early 1980s, has as its major goal the reduction of victim/bullying problems among primary and secondary school children. It achieves this goal by increasing the awareness of the bullying problem, actively involving teachers and parents, developing clear rules against bullying behavior, and providing support and protection to the victims of bullying. The Bullying Prevention Program has been shown to result in substantial reductions in the frequency with which students report being bullied and bullying others, significant improvements in the "social climate" of the class, and significant reductions in students' reports of vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy (Olweus,

Programs for Prevention of Bullying

Bullying Prevention Program

The Bullying Prevention Program is a multilevel, multi component program designed to reduce victim/bully problems among primary and secondary students by restructuring the existing school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying behavior. All students participate in most aspects of the program, while students identified as bullies or victims receive additional individual interventions. Core program components are implemented at the school, classroom, and individual levels.

School-level components include an anonymous student questionnaire assessing the nature and prevalence of bullying at a school; a school in-service day for discussing bullying problems, increasing awareness and knowledge of the problem, and planning the implementation of the program; the formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to coordinate all aspects of a school's program; and the development of a coordinated system of supervising students during break periods.

Classroom-level components include establishing and enforcing classroom rules against bullying, holding regular classroom meetings with students to increase knowledge and empathy, and encouraging pro social norms and behavior. Meetings with parents are also scheduled to foster more active involvement on their part. Individual-level components include interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, support and protection for the victims of bullying, and discussions with the parents of involved students provided by the Committee for Children (n.d.), Steps to Respect is based on research demonstrating that teaching certain skills is an effective method of reducing bullying behavior. The entire school staff attends three-hour all-staff training. Because it is designed to increase adult awareness of bullying at school and teach adults how to respond effectively to children's reports of bullying, this staff training is an essential component of Steps to Respect. Skill lessons focusing on building students' skills in making and keeping friends, solving problems, managing emotions, and responding to bullying are taught once a week followed by one 15- to 20-minute booster session taught later during the same week. An eleventh lesson reviews, summarizes, and concludes each level.

Programs for Prevention of Substance Abuse

Life Skills Training

Life Skills Training (LST) is "designed to provide middle school students with the motivation and skills necessary to resist peer and media pressure to use drugs". Life Skills Training has been recognized as a program that "works" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Medical Association, and the American Psychological Association (O. Mayer, 1999) and has been recognized as one of ten model blueprint programs that has met the scientific standards set by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (1999),Life Skills Training is a three-year, sequential intervention consisting of 15 sessions for seventh-grade students followed by a two-year booster component of 10 sessions in the second year and 5 sessions in the third year (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1999). The program teaches students general self-management skills and skills related to avoiding substance abuse through training techniques such as instruction, demonstration, feedback, reinforcement, and practice. Life Skills Training has been shown to dramatically reduce tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana use across a wide-range of adolescents, and to maintain these changes over a period of time. For example, evaluations of Life Skills Training "have found a 31 percent reduction in alcohol use, a 32 percent reduction in alcohol and marijuana use after four months, and a 4 percent reduction in alcohol and marijuana use after 16 months for program students"

Know Your Body

Know Your Body (KYB) is a skill-based health education program for children in grades K through 6. According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (1999), KYB involves 35 hours of classroom instruction each year in addition to performance assessments, workshops, brochures, and a parent and community component. To address a wide range of health and social-issue related topics, the KYB curriculum "combines de-velopmentally appropriate health instruction, in addition to building cognitive and behavioral skills" (p. 42). The KYB curriculum is multiethnic and has even been translated into seven languages. An evaluation of the program using a sample of Black and White students in an urban setting found that fifth-and sixth-grade

program youth had a “prevalence rate for tobacco that was 23 percent lower than youth who did not participate in the program.

Programs for Prevention of Truancy

The school environment is an integral factor in student attendance and performance, and school social workers and others interested in increasing attendance must create invitational and welcoming schools. For example, one Kentucky high school requires that teachers compliment marginal students as well as offer academic incentives for good attendance (Rohrman, 1993). Other ways of creating invitational schools is helping teachers to minimize verbal reprimands and other forms of punishment, and to deemphasize competition in the classroom. Several school wide programs have been developed to prevent truancy. Garry (1996) described three of these programs. The At School, ON Time, Ready to Work program, recognizing that many truant children are placed in the custody of social service agencies, focuses on preventing children’s removal from home. Project Helping Hand is an early identification and intervention.

Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease

Program that provides counseling for parents and elementary students at risk of developing chronic truancy problems. Operation Save Kids addresses truancy through a broad-based coalition of citizens and businesses in an Arizona community.

Programs for Prevention of Sexual Abuse

According to Tutty (1995), the Who Do You Tell? Program uses discussion, pictures, short videos, and developmentally appropriate role plays to provide children, from kindergarten to sixth grade, with information and permission to say no to unwanted touch. Two leaders work with groups of between 15 to 20 children for two sessions of 45 to 60 minutes each, presented on consecutive days. Following the presentations, children are given the opportunity to ask for individual time to talk to the presenters. Parental permission is required. An evaluation of the Who Do You Tell? program, involving 231 children, found that participants were more likely to know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch than non partici-pants (Tutty, 2000).

Programs for Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Disease

Contrary to the fears of many parents, it has been shown that programs that focus on sexuality (including HIV education programs, school-based clinics, and condom availability programs) do not increase any measure of sexual activity (Kirby, 1997). Despite the fact that the Bush Administration is boosting funding for abstinence-only programs, scientifically proven programs include information about both abstinence and contraception. It has also been shown that broad-based community support and parental involvement are critical to the implementation and success of adolescent pregnancy prevention efforts (Arnold, Smith, Harrison, & Springer, 1999). Since a number of myths surround this issue and since it is such an emotionally laden issue, it is essential that school social workers present the facts to educators and the general public about what approaches are effective in preventing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. To counteract community resistance, school social workers must also build a broad-based community coalition to assist in the design and implementation of these programs.

Several programs have been found to be successful in reducing the initiation of sexual activities, reducing unwanted pregnancies, increasing contraceptive use, and increasing the proportion of students abstinent before the program to successfully remain abstinent following the program. Postponing Sexual Involvement is a program for African American eighth graders that uses older peers (eleventh and twelfth graders) to help youth understand social and peer pressures to have sex and to develop and apply resistance skills (Ekstrand et al., 1994). Healthy Oakland Teens (HOT) uses health educators to teach basic sex and drug education and peer educators to lead experiential exercises focusing on values, decision making, communication, and condom-use skills (Ekstrand et al., 1994). Reducing the Risk is a high school program that uses role playing and experiential activities to enhance skills and to reduce unprotected intercourse by avoiding sex or using protection (Kirby, Barth, Leland, & Fetro, 1991). The Carrera program offers not only traditional sex education, but also tutoring, SAT preparation, job skills, medical and dental care, sports, and creative arts (Lewin, 2001).AIDS Prevention for Adolescents in School is a program for ninth and eleventh graders that focuses on providing accurate information about AIDS, evaluating risks of transmission, increasing knowledge of AIDS-prevention resources, exploring personal values, understanding external influences, and teaching skills to delay intercourse (Walter & Vaughn, 1993).

Innovative Programs Designed to Transform Schools

Too many schools are places of fear, intimidation, and zero tolerance rather than places of learning (Civil Rights Project, 2000). Making our schools safe havens would go a long way to counteract the negative home and community experiences of many at-risk children and youth (Garbarino et al., 1992). The more that youth feel bonded to schools, the less likely they are to engage in antisocial behavior (Hawkins & Weis, 1985). The innovative programs described in this section have been shown to transform schools in a number of creative ways.

School Development Program

The School Development Program (SDP) seeks to transform the culture of elementary schools composed of primarily low-income, African American students. It accomplishes this goal by forming a "representative governance and management team composed of school administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents" This school management team identifies "goals for the school, plans activities to meet these goals, monitors activities, and takes corrective action to keep the activities on track" (Gottfredson, 2001, p. 130). The school management team oversees the establishment and implementation of a parent program and a multidisciplinary mental health team designed to address student behavior problems. By encouraging these supportive relationships, SDP builds a school community that promotes the social, emotional, and academic development of students (Corbin, 2001). SDP is based on the assumption that significant adults play a major role in children's learning and that congruence in goals and values between home and school is very important, particularly for children at risk for educational failure (Catalano, Loeber, & McKinney 1999). It has been found that students participating in the SDP had significantly higher grades, academic achievement test scores, and self-reported social competence as compared to a similar group of students who did not participate in the program (Catalano et al., 1999).

School Transitional Environment Project

The School Transitional Environment Project (STEP) focuses on changing the school culture and climate to be less threatening and overwhelming to students during their transition from elementary to middle or from middle to high school. According to Greenberg et al. (2000), STEP's core components include:

1. Creating "cohorts" of transitioning students who remain together as a group during core classes and home room.
2. Restructuring classes to create smaller "learning communities" within the larger school.
3. Redefining the role of the homeroom teacher to that of "advisor" to students in his or her cohort and "liaison" between the students, their families, and the rest of the school.

The homeroom teacher also helps students select classes and addresses truancy issues with families (Greenberg et al., 2000). Felner and colleagues (Felner, Ginter, & Primavera, 1982; Felner et al., 1993) found in a series of evaluations that "STEP's restructuring of the school environment produced significantly lower levels of stress and reductions in anxiety, depression and delinquent behavior

Seattle Social Development Project

The Seattle Social Development Project (SSDP) is designed to develop children's communication, conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills by targeting multiple risk factors across several settings (Hawkins, Von Cleve, & Catalano, 1991). In the classroom component, teachers are trained in proactive classroom management, interactive teaching (Brophy, 1986), and cooperative learning (Slavin, 1991). Teachers also teach refusal skills related to substance abuse and peer pressure in sixth-grade classes. The parent training component consists of parent classes offered in collaboration with local school and parent councils (Hawkins et al., 1991). Students who participated in SSDP had reduced rates of teacher-reported aggression and externalizing behavior in second grade, had more proactive family management by parents and greater family communication in fifth grade, spent less time with deviant peers at the end of sixth grade, and had statistically significant positive outcomes related to commitment and attachment to school by age 18 (Hawkins et al., 1991).

Child Development Project

The Child Development Project (CDP) is designed to transform schools into "caring communities of learners" (Greenberg et al., 2000). The CDP is "based on research showing that school contexts in which children feel valued and accepted by teachers and peers and in which

students are granted greater autonomy are associated with higher levels of prosocial behavior, greater intrinsic motivation in learning, and fewer conduct problems" .Program components include school staff training in cooperative learning strategies, cross-grade "bud dying" activities, and involving students in classroom decision-making Longitudinal research on the CDP supports its "effectiveness in enhancing pro social competencies and reducing substance abuse and delinquent behaviors"

As with the student-focused interventions described in Chapters 3 and 4, the implementation of these school-based prevention programs poses a number of challenges for school social workers. To meet these challenges, school social workers must develop "political savvy" because the work involved in bringing about systemic changes is a "daunting task that requires a steadfast commitment from the principal, teachers, staff, parents, and community. Specifically, it is difficult to "sell" the concept of prevention to school administrators, school board members, and a skeptical public concerned about how their tax dollars are being spent. The public is much more willing to spend money on prison construction than prevention programs. As John Calhoun, from the National Crime Prevention Council, so powerfully stated, "If you're in trouble, we are ready to spend $20,000 to $30,000 a year on a prison cell for you. We need a companion promise that we will address problems before they get out of control." Consequently, school social workers must become familiar with recent advances in prevention research (as described in this chapter) and those specific prevention programs that have been shown to be effective in minimizing and preventing a host of school problems such as those described in this chapter. School social workers need to share this knowledge with school administrators, school board members, and a skeptical public. To assist with these advocacy efforts, it may be helpful to enlist supportive teachers and community members. Another major challenge in starting a new program is finding adequate funding. School social workers will often find it necessary to collaborate with community agencies or a nearby university to write grants.

Summary

Several decades of prevention research have greatly expanded our knowledge base of "what works" in school-based programs. Several essential elements can be found in successful school-based prevention programs. Successful school-based prevention programs do more than reach

the individual child; they also seek to change the total school environment. Individual-change strategies use experiential techniques rather than a lecture format, and school-change strategies are designed to impact the culture and climate of the school. Successful prevention programs require multiple years of intervention using standardized, detailed lesson plans.

A number of proven or promising school-based prevention programs employ both individual- and school-change strategies. Included are programs designed to prevent violence, bullying, substance abuse, truancy, sexual abuse, and teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Several innovative programs have been designed to transform schools so that they reach out to at-risk students rather than pushing them out. Since school leaders will increasingly turn to those professionals with expertise in implementing successful school-based prevention programs, school social workers should seize this opportunity by marketing themselves as professionals who not only provide clinical services to individual students and their families but also have knowledge of and expertise in implementing successful school-based prevention programs such as those discussed in this chapter.

Questions for Discussion

1. What essential elements have been found in successful school-based prevention programs?
2. What school-based violence prevention program is widely regarded by public health experts as one of the most promising violence prevention programs in operation today?
3. What is the first and best-known intervention that specifically targets bullying in schools?
4. What can school social workers do to change a school's culture and climate to reduce truancy and dropouts?
5. Name several challenges that await school social workers in attempting to implement school-based prevention programs. What steps can school social workers take to meet these challenges?

Refer to the case study at the beginning of this chapter:

1. What should Ms. Cory do to prepare for her meeting with the principal? How can she inform and persuade the principal that there is a problem and action needs to be taken?
2. What steps could Ms. Cory take to begin to change the climate of this particular school?

3. Who are several important “players” that Ms. Cory needs to reach out to in order to bring about changes in this school?

Chapter 7:The School Social Worker as Consultant and Team Member

Why consultation?

- Why teachers seek consultation.
- The defining characteristics of consultation in schools.
- Pitfalls to avoid in consultative relationships.
- School teams and effective collaboration.
- Strategies and programs designed to prevent classroom behavior problems.

Linda, a school social worker at Marshall Middle School, was having lunch in the teacher's lounge when Mrs. Cooper, a seventh grade math teacher, sat down at a table and loudly joked about what a "mean" teacher she is and how her kids wish they weren't in her class. After everyone else left, however, Mrs. Cooper became serious and confided that this bothered her. She didn't know why she wasn't connecting with her students or what to do about it. Linda asked her if she just wanted her to listen or if she was asking for help. Mrs. Cooper said she would like help with this. Linda described the process of consultation and asked if Mrs. Cooper would like to meet with her for a few weeks to explore some possible changes in her classroom. Mrs. Cooper agreed, and they set up a time to meet after school that day.

Introduction

The number of students labeled "mildly disabled," "difficult-to-teach," or "at risk" has increased dramatically over the past decade. Regardless of their label, these students respond poorly to traditional instructional and behavioral management methods (Rathvon, 1999). For example, teachers may limit themselves to didactic instructional techniques or, as illustrated in the case vignette, teachers may use discipline techniques based on fear and intimidation such as screaming, sarcasm, threats, and ridicule to control students in their classrooms (Hyman, 1997). Teachers, as well as other adults in authority, must be helped to understand how their expectations, attitudes, instructional techniques, and behavior impact students' behavior in and out of the classroom (Short & Short, 1987).

This chapter discusses the role of the school social worker as consultant and the various ways that he or she can support classroom teachers in meeting the needs of students who respond poorly to traditional instructional and behavioral management methods. It explores why teachers seek consultation as well as major pitfalls in

consultative relationships. This chapter also discusses characteristics of effective collaboration in school teams, barriers to collaboration, and some new perspectives on collaboration. It concludes with a description of several strategies and programs that school social workers can draw on to assist teachers in preventing classroom behavior problems.

Why Consultation?

Consultation is becoming an increasingly important role for school social workers for a number of reasons. Many classroom

problems can result when teachers unknowingly dominate communication in the classroom, rely on repetitive work, or lack insight into how their personal beliefs and behaviors toward students impact students' academic performance and behavior (Erchul & Martens, 1997). For example, it has been reported that negative teacher attitudes toward students generally emerge in the first few weeks of classes and that these attitudes tend to remain stable even after students display consistent improvement in behavior (Safran & Safran, 1985). Consequently, school social workers, in their role as consultants, can help teachers become more aware of these harmful behaviors and attitudes as well as point out any efforts that students may be making to improve their behavior.

Perhaps the most important reason that consultation is becoming an increasingly important role for school social workers is that the current pull-out student service delivery model, consisting of traditional one-on-one or small group counseling, does not reflect the ecological perspective. According to the ecological perspective, student problems are viewed as emanating from student-environment mismatches rather than internal child deficits (Rathvon, 1999). Given this view, it is important to address problems in the environment where the behavior occurs. Rather than pulling students out or labeling them, school districts across the United States are implementing school-based intervention assistance programs (IAPs) or teacher assistance teams (TATs) that provide consultative services to teachers to assist students with academic or behavioral problems (Rathvon, 1999). School social workers are key members of these school-based IAPs and TATs.

Why Teachers Seek Consultation:

Teachers may seek the assistance of a school social worker as a consultant for several reasons. The primary reason is lack of knowledge, skills, or both (Erchul & Martens, 1997). For example, many teachers are

overwhelmed in their attempts to work with students who demand constant attention and fail to complete class assignments. Teachers may not understand why certain behavior problems are taking place in their classroom (as illustrated in the case vignette at the beginning of this chapter). School social workers, in the role of consultant, can provide teachers with a number of reasons for students' misbehavior (see Table 9.1), including the teacher's failure to reward appropriate behaviors or positively reinforce undesirable behaviors. In addition to seeking help with classroom behavior problems, teachers may seek information about child abuse reporting laws or community resources and school social workers are able to provide teachers with answers to these questions. Another reason teachers may seek a consultant is a need for attention, support, approval, or a "pat on the back." Still another reason is a lack of objectivity (Erchul & Martens, 1997), which can reveal itself in several ways. For example, a teacher may be too close to a problem to be able to deal with it effectively, or a teacher may have taken on a rescuer role by doing more for a student than is necessary in a given situation.

Why Classroom Behavior Problems Occur

- The child has not learned a more appropriate behavior that leads to the same consequences.
- More appropriate behaviors are ignored.
- More appropriate behaviors lead to undesired consequences.
- The problem behavior is followed by desired sensory, edible, tangible, social, or activity consequences.
- The problem behavior allows the child to stop or avoid undesired situations.
- The problem behavior occurs when it is likely to be reinforced.
- The problem behavior occurs when it is initiated by other individuals.
- The problem behavior occurs because the child observed someone else doing it.

Defining Characteristics of Consultation in Schools

Several characteristics define consultation in a school setting. Friend and Cook (1992) and Erchul and Martens (1997) have delineated several characteristics that are central to successful consultation:

1. Consultation is triadic and indirect. The consultant (e.g., school social worker) and the consultee (an individual teacher or administrator) together design services that the consultee provides to the client (e.g., student or group of students). The school social worker's relationship to the student in a consultative relationship is indirect; students are not direct participants but are beneficiaries of this process.

2. Consultation is voluntary. The consultant and consultee are free to enter into or terminate the relationship at any time. The consultation process can be implemented only as long as the consultant's and consultee's participation is voluntary.

3. All interactions between the consultant and consultee are to be held in confidence unless the consultant believes that someone will be harmed if this silence is maintained.

4. Consultation typically involves an expert relationship. While their relationship is nonhierarchical, the primary reason for this relationship is that the consultee has a problem that requires the expertise of the consultant.

5. Consultation is a problem-solving process with steps or stages. These steps include establishing a working relationship (e.g., "Can we work together?"), identifying the problem (e.g., "What is the problem?"), planning and intervening (e.g., "What can you do to address the problem?"), evaluating the intervention (e.g., "Did the intervention work?"), and terminating the consultation.

6. Participants in consultative interactions have shared but differentiated responsibilities and accountability. As consultants, school social workers must offer assistance that is responsive to the consultee's needs while the consultee is responsible for seriously considering the assistance being offered. However, the consultee is always free to reject whatever the consultant offers.

7. Consultation has a dual purpose—to help the consultee with a current professional problem and to equip the consultee with added insights and skills that will permit him or her to deal effectively with similar future problems without the consultant's assistance. Through the consultation process, school social workers empower teachers to become better problem solvers in addressing present as well as future problems.

To help ensure that teachers will be receptive to the consultation process, Erchul and Martens (1997) presented a series of steps that can be taken by consultants to help facilitate the consultation process in schools (see Table 9.2). As shown in

Steps to Facilitate the Consultation Process

- Listen attentively to teacher frustrations with classroom problems.
- Provide a "sounding board" for teacher ideas.

- Compliment teacher actions when successful.
- Offer encouragement when teacher efforts are less than successful.
- Instruct teachers in how to assess classroom problems in a sympathetic manner.
- Help identify and, whenever possible, take an active role in recruiting additional resources or seeking alternative solutions that may be available Elsewhere in the school.
- Help teachers help themselves, as in peer coaching.
- Make school-based consultation available to a greater number of consultees.
- Inform teachers of the best available treatment technologies.
- Guide teachers through the problem-solving process of consultation.
- Assist teachers in treatment implementation and evaluation.
- Help teachers make assessment information relevant for intervention

many of these steps involve giving teachers a "pat on the back," recognizing them for the efforts they are making in their classrooms as well as being a sounding board for teachers who need to ventilate and problem solve. Another critical step for consultants is to provide teachers with the best available treatments such as those described later in this chapter.

Rathvon (1999) offered two points to keep in mind before initiating the consultation process. First, consultation will usually result in teachers taking on responsibilities or demands beyond their already-substantial workload. Therefore, teachers will be much more likely to use interventions that are relatively simple to implement and require little time and few material resources. Second, no intervention works equally well with every student, with every teacher, or in every situation. Therefore, the selection of interventions should be a collaborative exercise between consultant and teacher or, in the case of intervention assistance teams, among team members and referring teachers.

Pitfalls to Avoid in Consultative Relationships

Before entering into conductive relationships with teachers and administrators, school social workers should be aware of several pitfalls. Teachers, administrators, or both could have hidden agendas in seeking a consultant. Erchul and Martens (1997) offered a number of pitfalls to avoid. For example, rather than seeking help in problem solving, a teacher may really want the consultant to take his or her side in a conflict with a student, a school administrator, or with another teacher. Or a teacher may seek a consultant but is unwilling to change first because he or she believes that students should initiate all changes. Or a

teacher may want help with a personal problem rather than a professional problem. Another pitfall to be aware of is a building principal who, under the guise of consultation, may really want the school social worker to spy on a teacher and report back to him or her about that teacher's performance. (See the Pitfalls in Consultative Relationships:

School Teams and Effective Collaboration

In some schools, a student identified as at risk for substance abuse, truancy, and dropout may be assigned to three different interventions carried out independently. To avoid this duplication, fragmentation, and piecemeal delivery of programs and services, schools have increasingly turned to a group of professionals who work as a team in addressing the multiplicity of problems impacting students and their families. Cohesive school teams help to maximize the impact and results of interventions ("Framing New Directions," 2001). As mentioned earlier, school social workers are key members of school-based intervention assistance programs (IAPs) and teacher assistance teams (TATs). As a member of these teams, school social workers serve as consultants to teachers who need assistance with students who have learning problems, behavior problems/disorders, or both. School social workers are also integral members of another form of school team multidisciplinary teams. These teams implement evaluation and placement procedures for children suspected of having disabilities. As members of these teams, school social workers conduct social assessments and mobilize a variety of services for students with disabilities, both in and outside the school, to help attain individualized educational program (IEP)

The effectiveness of any school team depends on the extent to which its respective team members (e.g., school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, and other specialists) are able to collaborate. Friend and Cook (1992) have described a number of essential components of effective collaboration. Team members must perceive and believe they are part of a team. Team members must trust each other, uphold confidentiality, and have a mutual respect for each other. The contributions of each team member must be valued, and there must be a sense of interdependence and parity among all participants. Team members must be able to share their resources and share accountability for outcomes.

While effective collaboration may appear to be relatively easy to achieve, it is much more difficult to accomplish in actual practice. Collaboration has been aptly described as an "unnatural act between no consenting adults" (Dryfoos, 1994). To achieve effective collaboration on any school team, a number of

institutional, professional, and interpersonal barriers must be overcome. Hooper-Briar and Lawson (1996) have discussed a number of these barriers:

Lack of physical space in schools for all student service professionals.

- The itinerant status of school social workers and school psychologists.
- Professional job descriptions that do not specify or support collaborative activities.
- One or more school team members perceiving other team members as less qualified.
- Lack of trust and defending one's own "turf."
- Differing conceptual orientations and professional values and ethics among various professional groups.
- Lack of flexibility and resistance to change.
- Lack of leadership.

These barriers suggest that true collaboration is difficult work and requires a substantial commitment of time, energy and patience from each team member. Rather than focusing on who gets credit for the program, true collaboration requires a professional commitment on the part of every team member to remain focused on providing the most effective interventions and programs for students with learning or behavioral problems. Collaboration also requires a need for changes in preser-vice preparation, certification, and continuing professional development for school social workers as well as other student service professionals ("Framing New Directions," 2001). See Chapter 10 for a detailed discussion of the importance of school-community collaborations in meeting the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged, at-risk students.

When a teacher refers an individual student because of a learning or behavior problem, consultants often discover that the referred student's problematic behavior extends beyond the referred student because student misbehavior is often "embedded in the ineffective organizational, instructional, or behavioral management strategies in the classroom" (Rathvon, 1999). As a result, school social workers in the role of consultants (like Linda in the case vignette) can assist teachers in selecting and implementing effective strategies or programs that will help them decrease off-task, disruptive behavior by changing ineffective organizational, instructional, or behavioral management strategies in the classroom. A number of empirically supported programs that address these ineffective organizational and classroom

management strategies have been successful in minimizing or preventing classroom behavior problems. The programs that follow are designed for implemention by regular classroom teachers, often with the ongoing support of consultants.

Good Behavior Game (GBG)

The Good Behavior Game (GBG) is one of the best-known behavioral intervention programs in the literature (Rathvon, 1999). According to Greenberg et al. (2000) and the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice (1999), GBG is a classroom team-based program for first graders that is designed to reduce early aggressive behaviors. At the beginning of the game, the teacher assigns the children to one of three heterogeneous teams. Students work in teams in such a way that each student is responsible to the rest of the group. During the GBG period, teams are penalized points whenever a member engages in verbal disruption or physical disruption, leaves his or her seat without permission, or otherwise does not comply. At the same time, teams of classmates who do not exhibit inappropriate behavior are rewarded with stickers or longer recesses. GBG is conducted three times per week for 10-minute periods and increases until it reaches a maximum of three hours. An evaluation found that students in the classes that use the GBG displayed significantly less aggressive and shy behavior than students in a comparison group (Howard, Flora, & Griffen, 1999). For example, middle school boys who had exhibited aggressive behavior in the first grade and participated in GBG were less likely to engage in aggressive behavior (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1999). During a nine-month follow-up, teachers reported a 10 percent reduction in aggressive behavior, and peers reported a 19 percent reduction. These reductions were maintained in middle school for boys who had displayed aggressive behavior in first grade (U.S. Departments of Education and Justice, 1999)..

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) is a schoolwide program designed to improve discipline in inner-city schools. The Center for the Study of Violence Prevention at the Strategies Designed to Prevent Classroom Behavior Problems

The Grood Behavior Grame (GBG)

The purpose of the Good Behavior Game (GBG) is to reduce disruptive classroom behavior using a team competition strategy. The game is played in the following manner: The teacher selects an instructional period

during which students are especially disruptive and unproductive. The intervention is introduced by telling students that they will be playing a game to help everyone get more out of the subject during which the game will be played. The teacher explains the criterion for the maximum number of demerits permitted to earn the reward and rewards for the winning team(s), such as wearing victory tags for the rest of the day extra recess, lining up for lunch, or extra computer time. If both teams win, possible rewards include viewing a videotape, 15 minutes of free time, homework passes, or a special art project at the end of the day. The teacher divides the class into two teams, making sure that disruptive students are divided between the teams. Teams may select names because this fosters team spirit. The teacher displays a chart or a section of the chalkboard visible to all students with "Team 1" and "Team 2" (or the names of the teams) written on it. The teacher then reviews the classroom rules at the beginning of the game and records a demerit beside the team name each time any member of a team breaks a rule (e.g., verbal disruption, physical disruption, leaving his or her seat without permission, or other noncompliance). The teacher tallies demerits at the end of the instructional period and declares the team with the fewer number of demerits as the winner. If neither team exceeds the predetermined limit, both teams are winners. Teachers are encouraged to gradually lower the limit for the demerits or extend the period during which the game is played. Critical components in reducing disruptive behavior appear to be the assignment of consequences, the criteria set for winning, and the division of students into teams. Direct feedback alone, that is, placing marks on the chalkboard for breaking class rules, does not affect behavior. Occasionally, chronically disruptive students will declare that they do not want to play the game and will deliberately violate the rules. If this occurs, the teacher should explain that it is not fair to penalize an entire team because one member will not control himself or herself. Create a third team consisting of the problem students and add a negative contingency such as remaining five minutes after school or deducting five minutes of recess for each marked scored over the criterion. GBG is conducted three times per week for a 10-minute period and increases until it reaches a maximum of three hours. GBG has been successfully implemented in regular elementary grade classrooms for emotionally disturbed adolescents.

University of Colorado reviewed 116 programs in the year 2000 and CMCD was one of only four U.S. programs that met their rigorous evaluation criteria. A core component of CMCD is creating classrooms in which teachers and students work collaboratively to set rules for classroom management and transform teacher-centered classrooms into person-centered classrooms (Fashola & Slavin, 1998). In person-centered classrooms, all students are provided with the opportunity to become an integral part of the management of the classroom. Classroom rules are developed collaboratively by the teacher and students; and rewards for positive

behavior, rather than punishment for negative behavior, is emphasized in these classrooms. Students, as well as teachers, are responsible for classroom rules; and it is assumed that their involvement would reduce behavior problems because students would be less likely to break their own rules (Fashola & Slavin, 1998). CMCD has been evaluated primarily with African American and Latino students in inner-city Houston schools. A five-year evaluation comparing five CMCD schools with five matched control schools found significant positive effects on standardized achievement tests, especially for students who remained in the program for six years (Freiberg, Stein, & Huang, 1995).

Behavioral Consultation to Reduce Violence/Vandalism

According to G. R. Mayer, Butterworth, Nafpaktitus, and Sulzer-Azaroff (1983), Behavioral Consultation to Reduce Violence/Vandalism is a 20-hour series of workshops that trains teams of school personnel applied behavioral analysis techniques (i.e., identification of antecedent conditions and consequences of the problem behavior) to reduce the intensity, duration, or frequency of the problematic behavior in the lunchroom, on the playground, and in the classroom. Teachers participate on a school team with student service professionals to plan and implement programs that teach students alternative behaviors to disruption and vandalism. An evaluation of the Behavioral Consultation to Reduce Violence/Vandalism program indicated that rates of disruptive student behavior and vandalism costs declined in significantly more treatment schools than control schools between the beginning and end of the school year (G. R. Mayer et al., 1983).

Effective Classroom Management

According to Gottfredson (2001), Effective Classroom Management (ECM) is an in-service training course for teachers focusing on the teaching of communication skills (e.g., "I-messages,"clarifying responses, and reflecting feelings), problem-solving skills (e.g., brainstorming, evaluating alternative solutions, and developing an action plan), and self-esteem enhancement techniques for use in their classrooms. Studies evaluating the impact of ECM training found intermittent significant effects on measures of correlates of problem behaviors (Gottfredson, 2001). For example, ECM boys had lower alcohol involvement than control boys and ECM girls had lower marijuana involvement than control girls (Moskowitz, Malvin, Schaeffer, & Schaps 1984).

In their role as consultants, school social workers can assist teachers in implementing these empirically supported programs. In addition to assisting teachers with classroom behavior problems, there are times when school social workers are called to consult with teachers to assist in schoolwide crisis events such as a student's suicide, death of a teacher, and school shootings. Pitcher and Poland's book (1992) includes a chapter on how student service professionals, including school social workers, can provide crisis intervention consultation in schools.

Summary

Consultation is becoming an increasingly important role for school social workers. In the role of consultant, school social workers can support classroom teachers in the teaching-learning process and be more effective and efficient in meeting the needs of large numbers of students who respond poorly to traditional instructional and behavioral management methods. School social workers serve as consultants either individually or as team members of school-based intervention assistance programs (IAPs) or Teacher Assistance Teams (TAT). Because of a number of pitfalls, it is essential that the school social worker communicate to teachers and administrators an understanding of what consultation is and what it isn't before becoming engaged in a consultative relationship. To avoid duplication, fragmentation, and piecemeal delivery of programs and services, schools haveincreasingly turned to teams of professionals who collaborate to address the multiplicity of problems impacting students and their families. While these school teams help to maximize the impact and results of interventions, truly collaborative teams must overcome a number of institutional, professional, and interpersonal barriers.Because a referred student's problematic behavior is often embedded in an ineffective organizational, instructional, or behavioral management system that impacts many or all the students in that classroom, the school social worker in the role of consultant must often assist the teacher in selecting and implementing empirically supported strategies and programs that impact entire classrooms. A number of programs, such as the Good Behavior Program, have been shown to be successful in increasing student attention and learning and decreasing off-task, disruptive behavior.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is consultation becoming an increasingly important role for school social workers?
2. Identify and briefly describe the defining characteristics of consultation in schools.

3. For what reasons do teachers seek school social workers for consultation?

4. What steps can be taken by school social workers to help teachers be more receptive to consultation?

5. What is the name of the exemplary classroom, team-based, behavioral intervention program for first graders designed to reduce early aggressive behaviors?