

Counseling specializations and mutidisciplinaty teams essay sample

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Teams Developing a strong professional identity provides counselors with the opportunity to understand how their unique roles play a part in an overall client wellness team. Counseling professions from different specializations frequently need to work together to provide effective services to students and families. Overall, wellness can be established and managed when multidisciplinary teams take into account the physical, emotional and social aspects of a client and treat them simultaneously.

Historical Perspective

Counseling developed in the late 1890-1900s. Its focus on wellness makes it appealing to all those seeking a healthy life-stage transition and productive life. At one point in time, the sole emphasis of counseling was to assist individuals of all ages and at all stages of life to avoid making poor choices by equipping them with meaning, direction and fulfillment in the decisions they made (prevention). It also was meant to help individuals grow resilience in dealing with change or loss. Today, counseling is much more. Counseling is grounded in wellness, development, mindfulness, meaningfulness and remediation for individuals, couples, groups and families. Wellness in counseling is defined as a way of life which targets optimal health, well-being in body, mind and spirit to live a full life.

A model of wellness was developed by Myers et al. (2000) and revolves around five life tasks spirituality, self-direction, work and leisure, friendship and love. Tasks such as self-direction are then broken down further into subtasks sense of worth, sense of control, problem solving and creativity, sense of humor and self-care. The foundation of this model is that there is an interactive developmental continuum where healthy behaviors affect later development and functioning. In all, counseling is a unique profession that is

committed to wellness (Myers Sweeney, 2008). Counseling Specialization It is important to examine the history of counseling because an informed counselor is well versed in the development and evolution of their profession. He/she is likely to have a strong professional identity and subsequently make significant contributions to the field. As a result of social, educational, political and economic trends, school counseling surfaced and continues to transform. In the late 1800s school guidance programs were closely tied to vocational education.

Early school guidance programs entailed lessons on character development, teaching socially appropriate behaviors and assisting with vocational planning. The general trend of school counseling was directive. Over time, this scope and focus of school counseling adjusted to address personal growth, provide services for the at-risk population and offer developmental programs. While responsive services, such as remediation and crisis intervention, are still offered, there is more of an emphasis on prevention and the promotion of healthy development for all students (Paisley Borders, 1995). Collaboration Family therapy is a branch of Psychotherapy psychotherapy that works with Family families and couples to foster change and development. Family therapy originates in the social work movements of the 19th century, but 20 years after social work and psychiatry family therapy evolved. Family therapy came about as a result of psychiatrists and therapists who broke away from their standard practice of confidential individual interviews. The new community psychiatry practice promoted meeting patients in their natural environments. The experiences acquired

while treating battle trauma of World War II with support group methods promoted this new role of familial therapy.

The common belief was to incorporate families in solutions and this very method benefited clients. Another contributing factor to the emergence of family therapy was a greater focus on family centered social ideals of the era (Beels, 2002). Collaboration in Casework School counselor and family therapist professionals can collaborate together to look at Ashley's circumstances in a more critical manner. As stated by McAllister, Morrissery, McAullife, Davidson, McConnell Reddy (2011) the mnemonic device of POEM is useful in distinguishing a deeper understanding of another disciplines history and belief systems (philosophy), how a professional acts in relation to the person who is struggling (ontology), the theory or knowledge that guides a disciplines practice (epistemology) and the strategies or tools that disciplines tend to use (method). When working with Ashley, utilizing POEMs raises awareness and allows for a more comprehensive interpretation of her individual situation. It also emphasizes the role of the family therapist and school counselor and how he/she can assist Ashley in creating relevant solutions in order to help Ashley adjust, act confidently and experience success in school and at home.

When addressing Ashley's situation it should be viewed from both a personal and social perspective. Reynolds (1990) noted that depression affects multiple areas of personal functioning, including the behavioral, emotional, somatic, and cognitive domains. It is very likely that Ashley's inability to focus or complete work is a result of her depression. Ashley's change in mood likely

interferes with her ability to concentrate which inevitably causes a decline in school performance. Most likely Ashley's depression is a result of a change in relationships at home. Ashley spends the majority of her day in school therefore, the school counselors should play a role in addressing her depression. School counselors cannot diagnose depression, but they do have an awareness of the symptoms of depression and can help identify students in need of referrals or treatment. The school counselor can provide assistance to Ashley in a variety of ways. The school counselor can conduct assessments by interviewing Ashley individually, consulting her teachers, and/or receiving parent input (Rice Leffert, 1997).

The school counselor's role can include conducting individual counseling and small group counseling with Ashley and other students in similar situations of divorce, remarriage and blended families. The focus of these group sessions can be to address problems adjusting to a new family and roles at home, as well as concerns with concentration and focus in school. These counseling sessions can give Ashley an opportunity to learn appropriate communication and coping skills and help her discover the positive aspects to a blended family. Furthermore, the school counselor can serve as Ashley's advocate, ensuring that her parents and teachers understand Ashley's need for help. According to Larner (2009), the family environment has a significant contribution to adolescent depression and family therapy can play an equally significant role in the prevention and treatment of this depression. In Ashley's circumstance collaboration with teachers, parents, and a family therapist is critical. Family therapy can assist Ashley and her newly blended family work through issues she is experiencing. In these sessions Ashley and her step

siblings will be provided a venue to sort out their roles individually and collectively, while her parents can do the same.

Family therapy will help address family issues and concerns while providing a platform for each member to voice feelings in a respectful and loving way. Team Collaboration Often family therapy originates outside the school setting and there is a disconnect with the educational atmosphere. Even when family therapy is a result of a school referral communication between school and therapists is poor and at times non-existent (Rotter Boveja, 1999). To ensure successful communication and collaboration between the school counselor and family therapist, planning and debriefing meetings should be scheduled. During these sessions decisions can be made collectively by both the school counselor and family therapist. They can work together to determine topics of focus, techniques and goals. Furthermore, review and feedback after each counseling session is vital to facilitate and assess goals, determine the direction of future sessions and allow for collaborative evaluation of overall progress.

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