



# QUESTION #4

## A Textbook Discussion

Guidance In Schools: Human development, Behaviour and the Interview

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Independent Study: EDUC 4580, Guidance and Career Education July 29th, 2013

Schmidt, John J., (2008) . “Defining School Counseling”, Counseling in Schools: Comprehensive Programs o Responsive Services for All Students, Fifth Edition, Boston: Pearson Education, p. 53 Inc.

Hansen, S., (2012), “Confidentiality Guidelines for School Counselors”. <http://www.school-counseling-zone.com>

Kids Health., [http://kidshealth.org/kid/feel\\_better/people/school\\_counselors.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feel_better/people/school_counselors.html)

Wright, J., (2013), “Models and Approaches for School Counseling”, Introduction to School Counseling. New York: Sage Publications.

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=166>

<http://www.encyclopediaofeducation.com/faqs.php>

**A.** List five beliefs you now hold about human development, based on the following:

1. Why do people choose the behaviours they do (What causes behaviour?) 2) What conditions affect a person’s success in life? And 3) How can people change?
2. Based on your beliefs state which theory of counseling is most aligned with your assumptions.

**B.** Discuss “interviewing “ as it relates to being a counsellor. Include making the situation warm and inviting, paraphrasing, ending the session.

# GUIDANCE 101

*Reflection on the task of counseling in schools.*



## Top 5 Beliefs

### People need counseling.

**WHY?**

- counseling has the potential to enhance the lives of students.
- young people face an array of concerns that affect their educational progress
- professionally trained counselors are equipped with tools to assist students in meeting and resolving these challenges
- counselors know how to respond appropriately to these challenges and can address an immediate threat to a person's emotional, social and psychological well-being (Schmidt, p.3)

### The counseling professional still needs to work to address diversity in schools.

**WHY?**

- the needs of the dominant culture prevails in urban and rural schools
- counselors need to work more closely with admin team to ensure that the programs offered by counselors are comprehensive to address learning needs of a wider audience of students.
- growing number of students with a myriad of unique talents, learning styles, special needs and cultural characteristics

### Life is a Balancing Act

**WHY?**

- it's a challenge to balance time and roles between being a leader of school counseling programs and being the counselor
- counselors have to maintain balance between preventative and intervention goals
- being proactive, organized and clearly communicating goals is essential in establishing a comprehensive program
- it is imperative to network with other counselors, experienced and otherwise to gather resources to allow counselors to achieve this balance in their roles.

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*"The counselor wants to help you learn as much as you can in class, be a contributing member of the school community, and be a positive influence on your environment."*

(from <http://KidsHealth.org>)



COUNSELORS ARE VALUED MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

**HUMAN BEINGS ARE DIVERSE**  
DIVERSITY MAKES US UNIQUE

*"Counselors and others who influence decisions regarding education must accept the challenge to develop effective school environments for today's [children.]" (Schmidt, p. 170)*

### BEING A COUNSELOR.

**B**eing a counselor, from what I've explored over the course of this study is a **calling** in that it demands a special type of person that is able to lead, to support, to research and to meet the needs of a **diverse** community. Schmidt urges counselors, regardless of the setting counseling is practiced, is a competent understanding of theoretical models and even clinical skills used to establish and maintain helping relationships (Schmidt, p.76). In my case of working with middle school children, counselors need to be quite skilled in understanding, compassion, patience (yes!) and communicating. Therefore, resorting to one approach with all students would leave a counselor in a

state of frustration not being able to make headway with a child in need. Creating a non-threatening, respectful relationship is key in ensuring mutual success (a counselor needs to feel a sense of self-worth too). One way to do this would be to visible within the school and not remained locked up in an office. These counselors are active in the life of the school, greet students as they enter the door and are seen building healthy bridges between staff members. Counselors are an important part of any school family.



In both group counseling and small group guidance it is important that counselors retain their leadership role [...] counselors set ground rules with each group member during the screening interview and they reiterate these rules at the start of the group and during subsequent sessions as needed.” (Schmidt, p.173)

Interviewing student, parents and even conducting interview sessions with teachers remains a critical role for counselors. Based upon the readings of Schmidt and from my personal experience, a guidance counselor needs to be mindful of the outcome of the interview and structure it so that well-being and self-concept of the interviewee remains at the forefront. (<http://school-counseling-zone.com>). The relationship a counselor builds with their “client” (or “stakeholder”, as I like to call it) must be positive and built upon the foundation of honesty, empathy, integrity and the promotion of emotional well-being.

A web resource site for children I recently visited listed questions that could be asked of a counselor:

1. What do I do if I don't like school?
2. Who can I talk to about my feelings?
3. How can I alleviate stress in my life?
4. How do I get along with teachers?
5. How can I combat bullying?

These questions were developed by a group of counselors from a survey they built working alongside students and teachers. In this case, the counselors, having planned their first stage of their program around these questions, were able to develop a comprehensive and meaningful program to meet the needs of their students. Although there are several web resources to answer questions ranging from sexuality to mental health, it can't replace opportunities to build rapport, to develop strategies and to actively problem solve that occurs during face-to-face conversation. Keeping a positive tone and eliminating the feeling that the student is being evaluated. The following are my suggestions for interviewing:

### Interviewing:

1. Establish a consistent place for students, parents and others to meet you. Although counseling could occur in a classroom or admin office, having one place where people can meet creates a safe, secure place outside of areas that a conflict may have arisen.
2. Organize the space well, free of clutter. Place current, helpful and accredited resources nearby for easy referral and for people to access. Provide comfortable seating so that one remains at eye-contact. Even have a poster that lists what someone can expect during the interview including confidentiality information would be appropriate to share.
3. Establish goal(s) for interview, keep interviews under 30 minutes. Open with a welcome and ensure that everything discussed by the student and counselor is kept in confidence between both parties.
4. Establish boundaries with respects to what will be discussed and what can't be discussed (Ethical Guidelines)
5. Actively **listen**. Don't attempt to offer solutions or answers to a student's issues. Be aware of when to offer praise when a student thinks of a strategy to solve a problem and when to guide a student to think about possible solutions. Employ open ended questions to help students enter into deeper dialogue.
6. Be ready to be **creative**: Role-Playing is a tool that can be used to teach children more positive, productive approaches to behaving and interacting with others.
7. Conclude with review of the goals and what was accomplished. Create situations where children can feel good about themselves and readily apply their new problem solving strategies (e.g. peer mentor, helping out in the office).

(continued from P. 1)

### Top 5 Beliefs

People are effected by the environment around them

**WHY?**

- life experiences often dictate how a child relates with others including adults
- values are established at home, tested and developed elsewhere. Schools are places where different people with similar or differing values convergence
- effective counselors recognize their roles in the culture of a school
- children behaviour often reflects with their perception of themselves

Children become better problem solvers when choice is involved

**WHY?**

- if children are administered consequences for poor choices they make, then they are less likely to respond to the consequences as logical and appropriate. Once a sense of “fairness” enters into a discussion, it makes it increasingly challenging to help children work through to arrive at a solution to problems
- Questions like “Is what you are doing possible to get what you want?” open dialogue between a child and counselor.

“People are usually more convinced by reasons they discovered themselves than by those found by others.” *Blaise Pascal*

What conditions affect a person's success in life?

#### 1. Attitude, point of view and outlook on life.

Students arrive to schools from various backgrounds and belief systems. It's important for counselors to be aware of their community and equip students with the strategies to set realistic goals and to provide it an outlet to express & celebrate diversity in healthy, positive ways.

#### 2. Persistence and Planning.

Goal setting is important not only to recognize what areas we need to improve in, but to note what strengths we possess to tackle challenges. If one feels that one can't overcome a challenge, then this can impact a life dramatically (e.g., facing a bully). Counselors help by equipping children with strategies to set realistic and to reflect upon goals to develop life-long problem solving strategies.