Article 53

Training of School Counselors

Paper based on a program presented at the 2013 American Counseling Association Conference, March 22-24, Cincinnati, OH.

Kelly A. Kozlowski and Susan Huss

Kozlowski, Kelly A., is an Assistant Professor of counselor education at Bowling Green State University. She is a former middle school counselor and was school counselor of the year in a southern state, as well as a recipient of The American Counseling Association’s Ross Trust Scholarship. Her research interests include school counselor development and training practices.

Huss, Susan, is an Associate Professor of counselor education at Bowling Green State University. She is the internship coordinator and her research interests include school counselor ethical and legal issues.

Abstract

School counselors have unique, specialized training needs that differ from those of clinical mental health counselors. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states school counselors should possess proficient skills in program development, program leadership, collaborative practices, as well as appropriate referral procedures. While the unique needs of school counselors have been documented in the literature, what is lacking are practical ways to meet these unique needs. This article highlights some of the unique needs of school counselors in training and suggests practical ways to meet these needs.

Introduction

School counselors have unique, specialized training needs that differ from those of clinical mental health counselors (Colbert, Vernon-Jones, & Pransky, 2006; Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Henderson, 1999; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996; Sears, 1999; Sink & Yilik-Dower, 2001, Sue & Sue, 2003). They are licensed by state educational agencies. They must be ready to function in a variety of roles to support all students’ academic, career, and personal/social development (Studer & Oberman, 2006). In addition, they work in complex educational systems, have large case loads, and manage school counseling programs.

Their jobs encompass much more than individual and group counseling, and the traditional training models are not keeping up with the needs of today’s school counselors (Brott & Myers, 1999; Studer, 2006). Unlike clinical counselors, school counselors need clarification of their unique role on a school campus while learning how to manage an
overwhelming number of referrals and student needs, how to manage the influences of teachers, how to maintain their own skills apart from teachers, how to implement counseling programs as well as how to integrate themselves and the counseling program into the school system (ASCA, 2010; Kozlowski, 2010). In fact the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) states school counselors should possess proficient skills in program development, program leadership, collaborative practices, as well as appropriate referral procedures (ASCA, 2010).

While the unique needs of school counselors have been documented in the literature, what is lacking are practical ways to meet these unique needs. Yet counselor educators are expected to provide relevant training and supervision experiences for counselor trainees, which include school counselor needs (CACREP, 2009). This article highlights some of the unique needs of school counselors in training and suggests practical ways to meet these needs.

School Counselor’s Role

School counseling is an evolving field, affected by state and national educational policies, economics, and school reform (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001; Herr, 2001; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). The school counselor’s role is not only defined by educational agencies, but it is also impacted by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which calls for educators, including school counselors, to be involved in efforts to close the achievement gap through increased accountability (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). It is important to keep in mind that state education agencies not only define the role of school counselors but also license them and regulate how they work.

Without the skills and training to be able to implement counseling programs and activities that are more conducive to addressing educational objectives, school counselors will likely continue to be held responsible for non-counseling duties and have their time allocated to such duties (Amatea & Clark, 2005; Colbert et al., 2006; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Studer, 2006). Within the field of counseling, school counselors face a unique challenge, for they are licensed/certified by state educational agencies but are trained in the field of mental health. Integrating mental health training in a school setting plus maintaining a counseling identity while meeting educational objectives can result in confusion for school counselors (Kozlowski, 2010). In fact, role confusion has long been a problem within the school counseling profession (Bern, 1963; Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Gibson, Dooley, Kelchner, Moss & Vacchio, 2012; Gray & McCollum, 2012; Harris, 2009; Hughley, Gysbers, & Starr, 1993; Lambie & Williamson, 2004; Mason & McMahon, 2009; McLaughlin & Boettcher, 2009; Spurgeon, 2012; Stack, 1977). In addition to the counselors’ confusion about their role, it is well documented that stakeholders are also often confused about the appropriate role of school counselors on school campuses (Amatea, & Clark, 2005; Lieberman, 2004; McGlothlin & Miller, 2008; Monteiro-Leitner, Anser-Self, Milde, Leithner, & Skelton, 2006; Perkins, Oescher, & Ballard, 2012; Perusse, Goodnought, Donegan, & Jones; 2004; Zalquett, 2005).

These studies indicate a need for increased clarity in the role and functions of the school counselor on school campuses. Counselor educators are in a position to address the issue of confusion about the role of the school counselor. In fact counselor educators are to clarify the school counselor’s role, function setting, and professional identity in
relation to the roles of other professional and support personnel in the school (CACREP, 2009, A.3., p. 40). In contrast to role confusion, one area that is clearly defined for school counselors is the need for implementing school counseling programs.

**School Counseling Programs**

In 2003, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) officially introduced the data driven and competency-based school counseling program model, placing the counseling program in a position to effectively complement academic rigor with affective development (House & Hayes, 2002; House, Martin, & Ward, 2002; Studer, 2006). The school counseling program is designed to complement the school’s educational goals by addressing students’ personal/social, career and academic needs. The program focuses on both the individual student as well as on entire student body.

In fact, ethically, school counselors should be “concerned with the educational, academic, career, personal and social needs [of every student] and encourage the maximum development of every student” (ASCA, 2010, A.a.b.). In addition school counselors must be prepared to work with a diverse student population (Uehara, 2005). To accomplish these tasks, school counselors are to be leaders, advocates, collaborators, consultants, and of course counselors (ASCA, 2012). Their responsibilities range from conducting counseling core curriculum lessons to academic planning; from program management and group counseling to college readiness; and from parent education to individual counseling.

School counselors need to be trained to implement a counseling program while still meeting the needs of individual students (ASCA, 2010; CACREP, 2009). In fact the training of school counselors should emphasize both program development and outcomes (Brott, 2006). There is extensive literature documenting the efficacy of both comprehensive school counseling programs and individual elements of the counseling program. The counseling program’s impact on academics includes the improvement of distal variables such as grades and standardized test scores as well as the overall academic success of students (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Hughley 2001; Lapan, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2003; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Lee, 1993; Mason & McMahon, 2009; Sink & Stroh, 2003; Whiston & Sexton, 2001). In addition, research has shown that both school counselors and counseling programs positively impact the personal/social well-being of individual students and school campuses (Barna & Brott, 2011; Bauman, 2008; Brown & Trusty, 2005; Horne, Stoddard & Bell, 2007; Mason & McMahon, 2009; Tobias & Myrick, 1999; Van Velsor, 2009).

**Experiences in Training**

It is imperative counselor educators are structuring the professional identity development of counselors in training through guided learning experiences (Brott, 2006). School counselors in training should become familiar with methods to implement comprehensive school counseling programs (Luke & Bernard, 2006; Murphy & Kaffenberg, 2007; Studer, 2006). Two ways trainees traditionally become familiar with implementing counseling programs are in practicum and internship experiences. What is problematic about practicum and internship experiences for school counselor trainees is
that counselor educators typically attribute more importance to concepts that fit within traditional training models, such as individual and group counseling, than they do to concepts outside the traditional counselor training framework. Specifically, educators perceived aspects such as working toward school-wide change as ancillary (Colbert et al., 2006). In addition counselor educators reportedly viewed the school-wide role of the school counselor as the least important priority in the training program when compared to the more traditional roles and skills of the community counselor, such as individual and group counseling skills (Perusse, Goodnough, & Noel, 2001).

Counselor educators rely on site supervisors to address school counselor training needs that are outside of traditional training models (Akos & Scarborough, 2004). Because of this practice, the school-based supervisor often becomes the sole voice of the profession as the voices of faculty fade in relevance and significance, resulting in poor induction of the counselors into the profession and poor development of their professional identity (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006).

Coupled with the fading relevance of counselor educators, it is assumed that site supervisors, despite their lack of training in supervision practices, are able to address the unique developmental needs of school counselor trainees. This can be problematic: although site supervisors may have heard about the ASCA National Model, their knowledge about it is often superficial (Murphy & Kaffenberg, 2007). A study by Studer and Oberman (2006) found that only 26% of American schools have implemented the ASCA model and only 23% more were moving toward implementing it. The remaining half (51%) reported working in a traditional model, not the developmental model. It can be frustrating for a student to learn about the benefits of the ASCA framework but receive supervision in a school counseling setting that is not yet fully transformed into the ASCA framework (Studer & Oberman, 2006). It seems that counselor educators, who are trained to educate competent school counselors, have a part to play in addressing the gap between theory and practice. In fact CACREP (2009) and ASCA (2010) state that counselor educators are to provide school counselors training and supervision experiences relevant to their future practice.

School counselors have unique training needs concerning the implementation of comprehensive counseling programs as well as unique clinical needs. Clinical needs include managing large caseloads to having to address not only students’ personal/social needs but also their academic and career needs.

**Unique Clinical Needs**

While the clinical experience can be one of the most valuable educational opportunities provided to school counselor trainees (Studer, 2006), school counselors face unique clinical challenges. School counselors work in complex educational systems, have large caseloads (ratios), and function post graduation without clinical supervision (Lambie & Sias, 2009). In addition school counselors work with a very diverse student population (Uehara, 2005). As a result, school counselors need to be trained how to manage large case loads, how to manage teacher/principal referrals, how to manage the overwhelming variety of student needs, how to establish and maintain close working relationships with faculty, and how to conceptualize the clinical process within the framework of a school setting as well as within a school counseling program (Kozlowski,
Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS 2013

2010). In particular these practices include collaboration skill development, leadership practices, and role clarification (ASCA, 2010). Training programs should offer relevant supervision and training experiences for school counselor trainees to address these needs (CACREP, 2006). The unique clinical challenges as well as the need for program development are two areas that counselor educators can address in training future school counselors.

Recommendations

Several studies have called for new training models that promote the school counselor’s role in educational reform (Colbert et al., 2006; House & Hayes, 2002; Sears, 1999; Wiley & Whiston, 2002). While the need for changes in training are understood, missing in the literature are ways to effect these changes. Included here are suggestions for ways to insert new practices into the programs that train school counselors. The following suggestions can be implemented within counseling courses or in practicum and internship experiences.

A Change in the Clinical Training Model

To address several of the areas of need within school counselor training—such as school counselors’ unique role, the large number of student referrals, and the influences of teachers—we can examine the referral process within a school system. Working within the current clinical mental health training model, school counselors learn to manage referrals in the same way as clinical counselors manage them. In this clinical model, clients come in for counseling by self-referral or because they are mandated to receive counseling; either way, the client is part of the process. Then the counselor conducts an intake both to identify the issue and to determine the severity of the presenting issue. At this time a treatment plan is established. In short, the process is that a client comes in and begins receiving individual counseling. Even if the school counselor is in a school setting for practicum and internship, supervisors will select students for counseling and refer the student to the school counselor trainee.

This referral method is not appropriate to a school environment because it does not clarify the role of the school counselor or promote collaboration or a systemic view that is needed in a school setting. Instead it describes school counselors as being solely responsible for the students’ presenting issues. In addition, students/clients who are referred by teachers are often not a part of the referral process. While some referrals may lead to individual sessions, not every referral requires individual counseling, and some more acute cases need a second referral to community-based counseling services. In accordance with the current clinical referral procedures taught to school counselors in training, teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders refer students to the school counselor and the school counselor then visits with the student to set up a plan of action similar to a treatment plan.

As a result of this paradigm, the school counselor can end up with many referrals and feel solely responsible for the care of the students/clients. It would be beneficial for school counselors to have training in how to consult and collaborate within the referral process and how to see that getting multiple referrals for the same or similar issues could
mean that they need to turn to the school counseling program for intervention on a larger scale.

To accomplish this paradigm shift, school counselors should first understand the difference between a teacher’s helping skills and those of a school counselor. In addition, school counselors should utilize student service plans as part of the referral process. These steps will help clarify the school counselor’s role, promote collaboration, and train school counselors to be aware of when they need to shift to a programmatic intervention for pervasive personal/social, career, or academic needs.

**Unique roles.** School counselors would benefit from understanding how their skills and role on campus differ from those of other stakeholders. These distinctions can be addressed in several ways. One way is to discuss the differences between teachers’ skills as lay helpers and their skills as school counselors. This can be accomplished by discussing the differences between the skills of a lay helper and the skills of a school counselor as defined in Skovholt and Ronnestad’s (1992) study. In fact, it is suggested that school counselors in training read and discuss this article.

In this article, Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992) acknowledged various helping relationships outside the counseling profession. Friends, parents, and teachers are all considered lay helpers who lack the professional training, theory, and ethical standards of counselors, yet engage in helping relationships. The lay helper is guided by personal solutions and common sense, projections of their own solutions, and over-involvement. As a result of feeling a strong identification with the problem, they tend to give specific advice. Bernard and Goodyear (2008) added that the lay helper is prone to boundary problems and prone to expressing sympathy as opposed to empathy. What sets the professional counselor apart from the lay helper is the understanding of theories of personality and change, boundaries, ethics, and diversity (Bernard & Goodyear, 2008; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003).

One way to enhance this discussion of role and helping relationships is through the use of movie clips. Countless movies portray individual student issues in schools. After watching brief clips, counselor trainees should discuss the differing roles of teachers and school counselors, as well as the roles of principals and parents in typical situations. In addition to learning differences between lay helpers’ skills and counselors’ skills, the trainees should also understand the collaborative efforts needed to assist a student with multiple needs: personal/social, academic, and career. A good source of movie clip ideas is from the counseling trainees themselves. Educators can simply ask them to suggest movies and have them bring in these clips for discussion. In addition, many free movie clips can be found on YouTube. Netflix and Hulu Plus also have a plethora of movie options for those who have accounts.

One useful clip is from the movie *Maid in Manhattan*, available on YouTube. An underlying theme throughout this movie is a young boy’s anxiety about speaking in front of a crowd. In one poignant scene the boy attempts to give his speech and in a panic runs off the stage. This scene can be discussed from three perspectives: the parent’s, the teacher’s, and the school counselor’s. Discussion might center first on what the parent does in response to the child, as portrayed in the movie. In this scene, the parent rescues the child from feeling bad, comforts him, and offers a distraction. All of these show very appropriate parenting skills.
Next the conversation could turn to what the teacher’s response might be and what skills the teacher would use to help this child. The teacher might suggest having the child practice giving more speeches or allowing the child another chance to give the speech, or even ways they themselves had overcome fear of public speaking and so forth. Finally, the discussion should focus on a description of the school counselor’s role in this particular situation. The counselor educator can help the trainee understand that school counselors have unique training in counseling skills that convey understanding and warmth, and how they can apply their unique counseling skill set. School counselors are trained to reflect feeling, to join such a young man in his struggle, to listen and validate, and to understand the issues underlying the client’s anxiety. After discussion of the various ways in which the school counselor might intervene, trainees should consider how all stakeholders could collaborate to assist this child.

Such collaboration would result in a different referral process. A teacher’s referring such a student would not result in the school counselor being solely responsible for assisting with the child’s anxiety, shorn of collaborative effort and support. In addition the school counselor would be able to clearly distinguish and separate his/her role from the teacher’s role, freeing the school counselor to utilize his/her unique skill set. This collaborative step interjected into the referral process leads to the next step in clarification of roles in the school referral process: to further address case load, role confusion, collaboration, and a system-wide view of intervention.

**Addressing large case loads.** Once the trainee counselor begins to understand how his/her role differs from the roles of lay helpers such as teachers, the next step could be sorting student referrals. Referrals to school counselors should be addressed differently than referrals in clinical settings. School counselors need training in not only the legal and ethical practices of referrals in schools but also in the differences between school intake processes and intakes in clinical counseling. It should be made clear that not every referral in a school requires counseling. Therefore all referrals should begin with a discussion about the reason for the referral and what remedies have already been tried. Thus, every referral should begin with the school counselor’s consulting with the person who has referred the child.

If every referral is not first considered in the larger consultative and collaborative context, the counselor can quickly become overwhelmed with referrals to see students. School counselors should be cautioned about jumping into individual counseling or taking ownership of the problem/issue and about making impractical promises or referring all issues out to the community. To bring a change in the referral process, McNaughton and Vostal (2010) offered a simple way to teach a strategy to establish the collaboration and consultation process a way that is easily implemented in the training of school counselors.

As an example of how collaboration and consultation can fit into the referral process, consider again the case of the young boy who was dealing with anxiety in the movie *Maid in Manhattan*. If a teacher had sent this child to the school counselor for help because he seemed troubled, the school counselor would need to first understand the reason for the referral. That might include discussing with the teacher what has already been tried, what the teacher is seeing in the classroom, when it began, whether the parents had been or are involved, possible IEP’s, 504’s and other basic, readily available information to help the counselor better understand the whole child. The school counselor
could consult with the teacher and offer suggestions that a lay helper could implement with the student. The school counselor could also offer insight about anxiety to help the teacher better understand the child’s situation.

If collaboration is needed, then the school professional should discuss which roles should be activated. This discussion could include distinguishing between what the teacher might do in the classroom to help the student and what the school counselor could do with the student. The role of the school counselor in this case might be to work on relaxation techniques or even to suggest some brief or cognitive behavior techniques. Such collaborative efforts prevent the school counselor from becoming the sole person responsible for the child’s well-being.

When having these collaborative and consultative discussions as part of the intake process, school counselors would do well to create and keep student service plans. A sample student service plan is located in Appendix A. Student service plans will distinguish helpers’ skill sets, further the collaborative relationship, and help reduce the counselor’s reaction of immediately counseling all referrals.

Organizing collaboration and consultation sessions. Student service plans have several advantages including clarifying the roles of teachers and other support staff, promoting collaboration, conceptualizing the student developmentally, setting clear goals, and helping school counselors know when to terminate counseling services. In addition, helping the student becomes a team effort, not the sole responsibility of the school counselor. In a post-referral discussion with a teacher, a school counselor should gather information that is listed on the sample student service plan included in Appendix A. After gathering information, the involved professionals would next discuss how to proceed. It is at this point that individual counseling may be brought in as a possible solution. This consultation process has the advantage of identifying non-counseling referrals and it allows for the consideration of referring out for more intense counseling. As a result of all these considerations prior to individual counseling, a school counselor’s caseload could be better managed.

School Systems and School Counseling Programs

In addition to individual student service plans, school counselors should be trained to look at all referrals collectively. This collective consideration of all referrals can identify issues that are prolific enough to warrant addressing them in groups, schoolwide programs, classroom interventions, mentoring programs, and so forth. This collective view also identifies areas where the school counseling program would be needed to manage numerous individual needs. This collective view also conceptualizes the counseling program within the school system.

For example, when school counselors have numerous referrals for conflict resolution, bullying issues, or organizational skills, this may indicate need for an intervention through a counseling program. The school counselor can then turn to the counseling program model and establish systemic interventions. While school counselors should be trained to know when a larger school issue requires a move to programmatic interventions, they should also know that programmatic intervention is often a leadership role, not a responsibility to be taken on alone.

The school counseling program as defined by ASCA (2012) is not designed to be something that school counselors create and implement as a solo endeavor. It requires
teamwork and tying the program to the school’s overall academic objectives. Dahir and Stone (2003) offered detailed suggestions about connecting the counseling program to the overarching school system. While in the case of identifying school need based on referral clusters is not necessarily data driven by critical data, the concept of connecting the school counseling program to the school system is the same concept as implementing critical data driven programs. Such school counseling program initiatives could also be written into a school’s adequate yearly progress (AYP) report, thus bringing the school counseling program into discussions about school reform and about closing the achievement gap.

Suggestions for learning how to address and how to implement large scale school counseling program interventions can also be done using movie clips. Many movies portray issues that are widespread in schools. For example, bullying is portrayed in movies such as *Harry Potter* and *Mean Girls*. Issues of suicide and cyberbullying are portrayed in *Odd Girl Out* and the issue of school violence is portrayed in the movie *Dangerous Minds*. As stated earlier, counseling trainees are a good source of ideas for movie clips. The counselor educator can simply ask them for ideas and have them bring in clips for discussion. In fact, an assignment in class can be to consider the schoolwide issue portrayed in the various movies and how a counseling program can address these issues.

The students can watch the short movie clip and discuss the schoolwide issue that is being portrayed. After that discussion, students could discuss how the school counseling program can play a part in addressing the issue. This discussion could include a brainstorming session about what elements of the counseling program could be implemented to address the issue. These interventions could include group counseling or staff development or parent education, linking to community resources, counseling curriculum lessons in classroom settings, and so forth. After identifying ways to address a schoolwide need within the counseling program, trainees should discuss identifying stakeholders who can assist in the implementation stage. In addition, as the trainees are gaining a broad perspective on how to address schoolwide need, they should understand that in practice, having stakeholders present as advisory board members in the initial brainstorming session is preferable when these ideas are put into practice in the real world.

When shifting from individual referrals to a schoolwide focus that deals with campus needs, school counselors might use the Response to Intervention (RtI) model. The RtI model is a systematic look at the individual student need within the context of the school system. It traces a systemic approach to meeting student needs. The RtI process can help school counselors conceptualize the school counseling program’s ability to meet every student’s personal/social, career, and academic needs. Understanding the RtI model creates a shared language between school counselors and faculty. It can bring the school counseling program into the discussion of school reform by integrating the counseling program into the school’s intervention process. Ockerman, Mason, and Hollenbeck (2012) offered specific suggestions about how the RtI model can be used to conceptualize the school counseling program within the greater school system.
Leadership Development

Implementing a school counseling program requires school counselors to develop a leadership mindset (Dahir & Stone, 2012). To assist trainees in developing leadership skills, a clear understanding of distributed leadership (Janson, Stone, & Clark, 2009) as well as participatory leadership (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2012) should be taught. After formal instruction about distributed and participatory leadership, the following activity can be completed to explore a trainee’s leadership skill development.

Students are given a list of leadership characteristics compiled from a variety of sources (Dahir & Stone, 2012; Dollarhide & Saginak, 2009; Janson et al., 2012). After reviewing the list, students are asked to identify characteristics they feel they possess. They are then asked to identify leadership characteristics others believe they possess. Finally, they are asked to identify three leadership skills they would like to develop further. The class is then divided into groups of three and asked to share a situation where they demonstrated leadership skill. The group then brainstorms ways trainees can further develop leadership skills.

Pre-Service Experiences

In addition to addressing the referral process, trainees would benefit from pre-service learning opportunities prior to practicum/internship experiences (Aldarondo, 2007; Mitchell, 2007). One example of a pre-service opportunity is for trainees to shadow school counselors in school settings. This shadowing brings to life the content talked about in the school counseling courses.

Another example of pre-service learning is to have trainees engage in a service learning project with a practicing school counselor. Together the trainees and the practicing school counselor would review the school’s data including AYP reports, school goals, and identified needs. Trainees could also conduct campus-wide needs assessments to identify critical data that exposes institutional and environmental barriers that impeded student academic achievement. Trainees would then create a counseling program plan to address these barriers. Through this real world experience, trainees would gain a better understanding of how the counseling program can address academic concerns. Additional benefits of service learning projects included the strengthening of relationships between universities and schools, as well as more fully integrating theory into practice (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Mitchell, 2007).

Professional Involvement

A final suggestion to address the specific needs of school counselors is to integrate school counselors firmly into professional organizations while they are still in training. Involvement in professional organizations can facilitate the healthy professional development of school counselors. In addition, it can mitigate the isolation of school counselors and help compensate for the lack of supervision of their counseling post graduation (Kozlowski, 2010).

How can prospective counselors enter the stream of their professional organizations? First of all, counselor educators need to be familiar with both ACA’s and ASCA’s resources, especially those online, as well as relevant blogs, Twitter and Facebook offerings. Then the educators can use professional resources, specifically social learning sites, in school counselor courses. For example, they can encourage counseling
trainees to listen to ASCAWAY podcasts or to join the ASCA scene as part of a course. In addition, educators could require trainees to use these resources to address questions in class. For example, in the class discussion about how to address school-wide needs, students could post a question on ASCA SCENE or search professional sites for resources and ideas.

**Conclusion**

School counselors work in complex school settings with unique job requirements. Therefore, they, uniquely, need to be trained in how to manage large caseloads and how to cooperate in establishing and/or improving and in implementing school counseling programs. Training that includes practice in how to incorporate consultation and collaboration in the referral process, training that demonstrates ways to integrate the counseling program into the school system—this can help meet some of the school counselors’ unique needs and can help launch them into productive, satisfying careers.

**References**


*Note: This paper is part of the annual VISTAS project sponsored by the American Counseling Association. Find more information on the project at: http://counselingoutfitters.com/vistas/VISTAS_Home.htm*
Appendix A

School Counseling Individual Service Plan

Student Name:

Age/Grade:

Date:

School counselor:

Referral source and reason(s) for referral:

Include consultation notes/information:

What have other staff (teachers, administrators) tried with the student and what were the results?

Response to Intervention (RtI) tiers model consideration (school, group, individual):

First Step (What will happen after the consultation—collect more information, review student records, team meeting, parent phone call, etc.):

Conceptualization Information (family history, school history, relevant information):

What are other stakeholder’s roles in the intervention process?

What is the school counselor’s role in the intervention process?

Goals and Objectives (educational goals [ED] and counseling goals [CO]):

What are the student strengths?

Interventions/techniques:

Criteria for termination:

Service Plan Review Date: