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From the Editorial Desk

Erin Radtka, M.A., LLPC
Editor

Although I have enjoyed my tenure, this is my last issue as editor. The publication is in definite need of submissions, which can be sent to Dr. Arnold Coven, our new journal editor. Please see the following page for instructions for submitting manuscripts and new contact information.

This issue of the journal has an educational theme. It begins with articles of major interest to secondary school counselors, and finishes with an idea for counselor educators.

The lead article, by Dr. Elizabeth Broughton and Dr. Ronald Willamson, examines school counselors' perceptions of their role in schools. The results are surprising and the article provides solid groundwork for future research in the area.

The second article addresses a significant aspect of school counseling, underage sex. According to author Sharie Reznich, many school counselors are unaware of the Michigan Requirement to teach students about the penalties of underage sex. The article is informational, and definitely shows a need for counselor education in this area, as well as a need for school counselors to be aware of district policies regarding everything from mandates to confidentiality.

Finally, we conclude with the third article, a practice-based article by Dr. Arnold Coven, Jennifer Araujo, Katherine G. Van Hull, Shedeh Tavokoli-Moayed, Ann Collins, Jina Enwiya, and Kathleen Boyes. The article shows the effectiveness of using a group process approach for teaching consultation skills to doctoral students.

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MCA GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Dimensions of Counseling: Research, Theory and Practice is the official journal of the Michigan Counseling Association and welcomes the submission of manuscripts for consideration. All submissions should be prepared according to the following guidelines. Manuscripts that do not follow these guidelines will be returned to the author without review.

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES

MANUSCRIPT STYLE: All manuscripts should be prepared in accordance with the standards specified by the most recent Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Authors are encouraged to use the "Gender Equity Guidelines" available from ACA and to avoid the use of the generic masculine pronoun and other sexist terminology. In addition, authors are encouraged to use terms such as "client, student or participant" rather than "subject."

ORIGINAL ARTICLES ONLY: Submission of a manuscript to Dimensions of Counseling represents a certification on the part of the author(s) that it is an original work, and that neither this manuscript nor a version of it has been published elsewhere nor is being considered for publication elsewhere.

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Full-Length Articles: These articles should address topics of interest using a standard article format. They may relate theory to practice, provide original synthesis of material, or report on original research studies. These articles should generally not exceed 3,000 words. Lengthier manuscripts may be considered on the basis of content.

Dialogs: These articles should take the form of a verbatim exchange, oral or written, between two or more people. They should not exceed 3,000 words.

In the Field: These articles report on or describe new practices, programs or techniques and relate practice to theory by citing appropriate literature. They should not exceed 400-600 words.

Reviews: These articles consist of reviews of current books, appraisal instruments and other resources of interest to counselors. They should not exceed 600 words.

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Paper: Use 8.5 x 11 inch white paper.

Spacing: All manuscripts should be double-spaced.

Margins: Use a minimum of one-inch margins on all sides.

Cover Page: To facilitate blind review, place the names of the authors, positions, titles, places of employment, and mailing addresses on the cover page only.

Abstract: Provide a clear abstract of up to 100 words and place on the second page.

Copies: When submitting manuscripts for consideration, send a cover letter, 3 hard copies (the original plus 2 clean copies) and a computer disk copy.

Computer Disk: All submissions should include a diskette copy of the manuscript at the time of initial submission. 3.5 inch floppy disks are required. The manuscript may be formatted in Macintosh applications or in PC applications, preferably Microsoft Word.

Address: Manuscripts should be submitted directly to:

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A Statewide Survey of School Counselors' Perceptions on School Issues

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School counselors maintain a unique professional role in a school setting. This article explores the perceptions of 255 school counselors in the State of Michigan on three contemporary school counseling issues: (a) pre-service training, (b) the professional role of counselors, and (c) school- related issues, related to the professional role of counselors. The results found no differences based on age among school counselors regarding school issues, while gender differences were found on three school issues. The results suggest that on certain issues, school counselors continue to be challenged with role ambiguity.

*T*he professional demands placed on school counselors have changed significantly.

Historically, school counselors focused on the vocational development of students. As academic preparation and professional standards for school counselors increased, the school counselors' professional role changed. Presently, the role of the school counselor has evolved from basic administrative responsibility to applying a comprehensive guidance plan (Baker, 2001). This comprehensive guidance plan places many demands on school counselors that involve multiple counseling tasks with individuals and groups, as well as applying programming skills, dealing with various stakeholders, and utilizing expertise in school improvement and student achievement initiatives. Because of their unique role in school settings, school counselors are often challenged while attempting to meet these demands.

These multiple demands contribute to one of the major challenges school counselors confront, which is role definition or ambiguity (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sears & Granello, 2001). The demands of day-to-day school emergencies many times differ with administrative and/or legislative demands, and these discrepancies can cause school counselors' priorities to shift, For example, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a recent priority, encourages school counselors to assist with the legislation's shift of focus to improving school achievement. This has led, in many cases, to more administrative responsibilities for school counselors, rather than traditional counseling responsibilities.

Another challenge for school counselors is dealing with various stakeholders, particularly with school principals. While sharing a common interest in serving students, school counselors and principals often approach student concerns from different points-of-view, based on varied preparation and philosophical orientation (Kaplan, 1995; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). For example, in regards to student discipline, counselors are bound to different ethical codes of confidentiality than are school administrators. These varied perspectives may lead to conflict, and can cause ineffective use of time and energy for both counselors and principals, thus contributing to role ambiguity for school counselors.

This ongoing debate regarding the role of the school counselor continues to confront the school counseling profession (Baker, 2001). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of school counselors on several school issues related to their professional role. This study builds on an earlier project that involved aspiring school counselors and school leaders in a cross-discipline graduate class that examined differing roles, legal, philosophical, and ethical expectations for each group, and approaches to collaboration (Williamson & Shoffner, 2002). Redefining the role of school counselors in our schools remains a national priority (Baker, 2001; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). To assist in dealing with this priority, an exploration of several school issues may help school counselors and assist in clarifying the school counselors' role.

Method

Based on prior research by Shoffner and Williamson (2000), a survey questionnaire was developed to assess school counselors' perceptions on a number of relevant issues regarding their daily work and professional role. The survey was constructed with statements such as, "school counselors should deliver discipline to students," and "school counselors should be certified as teachers." These 24-items were divided into three areas: (a) pre-service training, (b) professional role, and (c) school-related issues. Respondents were asked to indicate their

agreement or disagreement to the 24 statements, using a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*). In addition to these 24 content items, demographic information about the participants was collected that included the following variables: gender, age, academic and professional credentials, school location, and years of professional experience.

Both content and face validity were established for the survey prior to pilot testing. Based upon the results of the pilot study, modifications were made to the survey, and the survey items were finalized. The refined questionnaire was also used in a parallel study conducted with school administrators (N =320; Williamson, Broughton, & Hobson, 2003).

A sample of 520 school counselors was randomly selected from the Michigan School Counseling Association (MSCA) membership list. Each member of the sample was mailed the following materials: a letter of introduction, the survey questionnaire, and a self-addressed envelope to return the questionnaire to the research team. Surveys were completed and returned by 290 participants, for an initial response rate of 56%. However, not all members of the MSCA are practicing school counselors. Each returned survey was reviewed to determine if the participant had actually served as a school counselor. Of the original 290 returned surveys, 35 were discarded since it was determined that the participant did not serve as a school counselor. Following this review, a total of 255 surveys were considered useable, for a 49% usable response rate.

These data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were first computed to identify the demographic characteristics of the participants. Then, descriptive statistics including the number, means, and standard deviations for each of the 24 content questions were determined. Finally, chi-square procedures were used to determine if statistically significant differences existed on responses to the 24 questions based on gender and age. The research team selected the demographic variables of gender and age, because it was decided that these two characteristics would have the most impact on the school counselors' perception of their role. Chi-square was used in lieu of a t *test because the data were not considered continuous and did not meet other assumptions associated with the* t *test (e.g., homogeneity of variance).*

Results

Of the 255 respondents, 16% ($n = 52$) were men and 84% ($n = 203$) women. The majority of the sample was more than 40 years old ($n = 190$, 75%). Advanced degrees were held by 99% of the participants. Almost 93% ($n = 236$) of the school counselors held teaching certificates. Slightly

over 40% (*n*= 103) of the participants described their work setting as a rural school, 45% (*n*=113) reported being employed in a suburban school, and 14% (*n* = 36) indicated working in an urban school. The work setting of less than 1% (*n*= 3) was not identified.

Considerable K-12 work experience was found among the respondents. The length of service working in K-12 schools ranged from 1 to 48 years of experience. The majority of the sample had more than 10 years of K-12 school experience (*n* = 187, 74%). The age of the respondents, their credentials, and years of K-12 work experience represented an experienced sample of school counselors.

While sharing a common interest in serving students, school counselors and principals often approach student concerns from different points-of-view, based on varied preparation and philosophical orientation (Kaplan, 1995; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000).

referred to school counselors' perceptions regarding their professional roles in regards to confidentiality issues. School counselors perceived that confidentiality should be maintained regarding student issues (*M* = 4.31, *SD* = .94) but also believed that there are situations in which confidentiality should be broken (*M* = 4.22, *SD* = .82). Chi-square analysis indicated a statistically significant difference in the implementation of a comprehensive guidance system when compared by gender (X^2 (1, *N* = 255) = 19.19, *p* < .001. Women (*M* = 4.62) were more likely to support a comprehensive guidance system than men (*M* = 4.19).

Pre-Service Training

Several survey items (1-8) in Table 1 are related to the perceptions of the academic preparation reported by school counselors. This study indicated that school counselors perceived that their academic preparation in counseling skills was strongly developed (*M* = 4.24, *SD* = .77), and the necessary skills for their job were adequately developed (*M* = 3.62, *SD* = 1.09). Participants indicated that their academic preparation in problem solving (*M* = 3.73, *SD* = .95), leadership skills (*M* = 3.34, *SD* = 1.02), career development (*M* = 3.40, *SD* = 1.19), and team building (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 1.01) were adequately developed. School counselors indicated that their academic preparation was not well developed in cross-training with other professionals (*M* = 2.81, *SD* = 1.05). Finally, school counselors perceived that their academic preparation provided the necessary skills for working collaboratively with faculty and staff (*M* = 3.09, *SD* = 1.08). Chi-square analysis for each of these items did not establish any statistically significant differences based on the variables of gender and age of the participants.

Professional Role

Regarding their professional role, school counselors were asked to respond to their perceptions of role responsibilities in schools. School counselors strongly perceived that they worked collaboratively with teachers (*M* = 4.63, *SD* = .62). They strongly supported implementing K-12 career development programs for students (*M* = 4.55, *SD* = .70) and a K-12 comprehensive school guidance program (*M* = 4.53, *SD* = .767). School counselors strongly perceived that they worked well with faculty and staff on issues related to career development for students (*M* = 4.25, *SD* = .921). The next two items

School-Related Issues

The remaining survey items examined school counselors' perceptions regarding school-related issues such as, career development, collaboration and conflict among school professionals, teaching certification for school counselors, and student discipline. School counselors believed teachers should deliver career development as part of the curriculum (*M* = 4.10, *SD* = .85). School counselors' felt less strongly about school counselors delivering career development in the classroom (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = .99). They also perceived less strongly that priorities for school administrators and school counselors often conflicted with each other (*M* = 3.51, *SD* = 1.19). The counselors reported that school counselors worked collaboratively with each other (*M* = 4.27, *SD* = .83) but were less likely to report that their school involved teachers, administrators, and school counselors in curriculum decisions (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = 1.16). Finally, the counselors indicated strongly that school counselors should be certified as teachers (*M* = 4.27, *SD* = 1.07).

The last four survey items were concerned with the administration of student discipline. The counselors believed strongly that school counselors should not deliver student discipline (*M* = 1.41, *SD* = .80). Chi-square analysis found a statistically significant difference among respondents based on gender regarding school counselors' involvement with the delivery of discipline to students (X^2 (1, *N* = 255) = 14.68, *p* < .05). Men (*M* = 1.63) were more likely to believe that school counselors should be involved in the delivery of discipline to students than women (*M* = 1.35).

Separate from delivery of student discipline, the survey examined whether school counselors should be

Table 1
Differences of School Counselor Perceptions of Their Role in the School Setting by Gender

	Means			SD
	Men (n = 52)	Women (n = 203)	Average (N = 255)	
1. My pre-service training prepared me with counseling skills.	4.21	4.25	4.24	.77
2. My pre-service training provided the necessary professional skills for my current position.	3.69	3.60	3.62	1.09
3. My pre-service training prepared me with problem solving skills.	3.65	3.75	3.73	.95
4. My pre-service training prepared me with leadership skills.	3.27	3.35	3.34	1.02
5. My pre-service training prepared me with team building skills.	3.33	3.41	3.38	1.01
6. My pre-service training provided career development training for K-12.	3.25	3.44	3.40	1.19
7. My pre-service training encouraged cross training with other professional disciplines.	2.77	2.82	2.81	1.05
8. My pre-service training provided me with collaborative training to work with faculty and staff.	3.10	3.09	3.09	1.08
9. I work collaboratively with teachers.	4.50	4.66	4.63	.62
10. I support implementing K-12 career development programs for students.	4.52	4.55	4.55	.70
11. I work with faculty and others on issues related to career development for students.	4.38	4.21	4.25	.92
12. I support the implementation of a K-12 comprehensive school guidance program. *	4.19	4.62	4.53	.77
13. I believe confidentiality should be applied strictly regarding student issues.	4.48	4.26	4.31	.94
14. I believe there are situations in which confidentiality should be broken.	4.29	4.20	4.22	.82
15. Career development should be delivered by teachers as part of the curriculum.	4.29	4.05	4.10	.85
16. Career development should be delivered by school counselors in the classroom.	3.85	3.86	3.86	.99
17. Priorities for school administrators and school counselors often conflict with each other.	3.58	3.50	3.51	1.19
18. My school administrators and school counselors work collaboratively with each other.	4.40	4.23	4.27	1.07
19. My school involves teachers, administrators, and school counselors in curriculum decisions.	3.92	3.61	3.67	1.16
20. School counselors should be certified as teachers.	4.48	4.22	4.27	.83
21. School counselors should deliver discipline to students. **	1.63	1.35	1.41	.80
22. School counselors should be involved in discipline.***	2.65	2.17	2.27	1.23
23. Principals/Assistant Principals are the only ones who should be involved in discipline.	2.88	2.97	2.95	1.33
24. Principals should consult with school counselors regarding student issues.	4.67	4.43	4.48	.64

* (X^2 (1, N = 255) = 19.19, $p < .001$

** (X^2 (1, N = 255) = 14.68, $p < .05$)

***(X^2 (1, N = 255) = 11.92, $p < .05$)

"involved" in student discipline. The response, similar to the previous question, showed that school counselors believed they should not be involved in student discipline ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.23$), though less strongly than the earlier question. Chi-square analysis of the responses found a statistically significant difference when comparing gender perceptions regarding school counselors' involvement with discipline (X^2 (1, $N = 255$) = 11.92, $p < .05$). Men ($M = 2.65$) were more likely to believe that school counselors should be involved with school discipline than women ($M = 2.17$). School counselors were non-committal about whether principals and assistant principals are the only ones that should be involved in student discipline ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.33$). Finally, school counselors perceived strongly that principals should consult with school counselors regarding school issues ($M = 4.48$, $SD = .64$).

Discussion

Perhaps one of most noteworthy findings from this study was the lack of differences based on age among school counselors. The expectation was that age would be a factor in how school counselors perceive their role in the school. This result may suggest that involvement in a professional organization that encourages new training and knowledge contributed to a shared understanding about the role among different generations of school counselors, the possibility to share knowledge through mentoring relationships, or a lack of change in the perception of school counselors' role in the school setting over time. Similarly, few items found a difference based on gender most notably in the area of student discipline. Student discipline may be perceived to contrast substantially from counseling, a helping profession. Gender differences regarding student discipline is worthy of future research.

Pre-service training appears to support the day-to-day work of school counselors. Responses from counselors were uniformly positive with the exception of one important area, cross- training with other professional roles and collaboration with colleagues holding those roles. Williamson & Shoffner (2002) reported that various professionals in schools, including school counselors, are trained separately and have few opportunities to learn about one another's responsibilities and role perspectives. Recently, researchers have advocated cross- training and collaboration for school professionals in academic preparation programs, particularly for school

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administrators and school counselors (Kaplan, 1995; Ross & Herrington, 2005-2006; Williamson and Shoffner). Providing more clarity and understanding of the differing roles of school professionals may contribute to minimizing any role ambiguity among school counselors.

This study found that there is broad agreement among counselors with regards to the importance of their role in career development and supporting a comprehensive school guidance plan. However, the study found lesser agreement around issues of confidentiality, teacher certification for school counselors, collaboration and conflict among school professionals, and school discipline.

School counselors were clear about their responsibility in the area of career development. The results on three survey items were not unexpected, giving the strong importance that career development holds in schools. As one of their professional roles, school counselors have long supported assisting students with navigating the world of work (Coy, 1999). This persistent support for career development contributes to a clear understanding of this professional role.

There was also strong agreement about the importance of implementation of a comprehensive school guidance plan. Supporting a comprehensive guidance system is tied strongly to the school counselors' professional responsibilities (Baker, 2001). Interestingly, the study found that women ($M = 4.62$) supported the comprehensive school guidance system more than men ($M = 4.19$).

A hallmark of the preparation of school counselors is the emphasis on maintaining confidentiality. Confidentiality is an important counseling cornerstone, especially when dealing with minors. The importance of confidentiality is a major ethical, legal, and professional issue that is addressed in academic preparation programs as well as by the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics and Practice. Glosoff and Pate (2002) stated that as part of an educational community, confidentiality is a complex balancing act between students, parents, and school systems. In this study, school counselors "agreed" with protecting confidentiality ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .94$). However, there was also strong support that there are situations in

which confidentiality should be broken ($M = 4.22$, $SD =$ .82). This result supports Glosoff and Pate's notion that school counselors struggle with balancing confidentiality issues. Isaacs and Stone (1999) found similar results in that the breach of confidentiality was more likely with elementary and middle school counselors than high school counselors. The responses to these two questions demonstrate an interesting professional dilemma among school counselors. It is an important area for further research.

A lack of consistent state and national requirements to become a school counselor has contributed to role ambiguity (Sears & Granello, 2002). Requiring a teaching certificate to become a school counselor varies from state-to-state. For years, the State of Michigan required a teaching certificate for school counselors. In 2001, the State of Michigan changed this requirement, and a teaching certificate is no longer required for school counselors. In this study, school counselors perceived that school counselors should be certified as teachers ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.07$). This result indicates that school counselors' perceptions are incongruent with state changes in the teaching certification. This result may also reflect prior professional training including bias regarding school counselors who are not certified teachers, since almost 93% of the respondents hold a teaching certificate. Because of the recent changes in Michigan with regard to the certification requirement, this was a surprising result.

Also, contributing to role ambiguity were the results that involved school counselors' perceptions regarding collaboration and/or conflict in the school setting with professional staff. Studies have indicated that conflicts regularly emerged among school personnel as they performed their duties (Kaplan, 1995; Shoffner & Williamson, 2000). Some recent proposals have encouraged school counselors to work collaboratively with school administrators and teachers (Education Trust, 1997; Williamson & Shoffner, 2002) to reduce conflict and maximize collaboration. Researchers have advocated for a clear understanding of the differing roles and responsibilities (Ross & Herrington, 2005-2006) and a mechanism for conversation and collaboration centered on high quality services to students (Williamson & Shoffner, 2002).

Finally, another issue that contributes to role ambiguity is the recurrent contentious school-related issue of student discipline. Several survey items examined school counselors' perceptions about their role in student discipline. The school counselors were reluctant to deal with student discipline and perceived that principals should deliver school discipline. Some writers and researchers believe that there is some discrepancy regarding involvement with school discipline among

school counselors (Broughton, 2005; Kaplan, 1995). There are some who advocate that school counselors should be an integral part of the disciplinary process without involvement in the sanctioning aspect (Burgess & Dedmond, 1994; Kaplan, 1995). Involvement, separate from administration of discipline, is seen as a way that school counselors can support their students especially upon their return to school. It is clear from the results of this study that school counselors have mixed feelings about such involvement. It will be important in subsequent research to explore this important issue in order to reach a deeper and more complete understanding of the differing views on student discipline among school counselors.

Interestingly, gender differences among school counselors on the topic of student discipline emerged from this study. Men ($M = 1.63$) differed with women ($M = 1.35$) in their self-reported preferences for dealing with student discipline. Men ($M = 2.65$) differed from women ($M = 2.17$) in their self-reported preferences with involvement in student discipline. These findings support the need for further research on the school counselors' role in the disciplinary process, particularly examining the impact of gender differences.

Limitations

The results of this study are important even with limitations that are inherent in survey research. This study used the MSCA membership list as the population frame. However, not all school counselors in the State of Michigan may be members of this professional association.

Summary

This study raised important implications for the preparation of school counselors and training beyond the school counselors' formal academic work. School counselors believed strongly for career development programs and a comprehensive school guidance system which provided clarity to their professional roles. Other school

issues examined, such as, teaching certification for school counselors, maintaining confidentiality, collaboration and conflict among school professionals, and dealing with student discipline, were found to warrant further research. Until such time when these issues have universal agreement among school counselors, role ambiguity is bound to occur within the school counseling profession.

At a time that school counselors are expected to manage multiple demands, it is important that school counselors build safe and trusting relationships with school

administrators, and engage in discussions about professional standards that shape the work of school counselors. Having a clear understanding of roles will allow school counselors to focus on their responsibilities for the best interests of their students (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).

In conclusion, this study supports the earlier research (Ross & Herrington, 20005-2006; Williamson & Shoffner, 2002), and demonstrates a continued need to explore school issues among school counselors, and how the school counselors' role, particularly role ambiguity, may affect their work especially with students.

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*F*or years, the State of Michigan required a teaching certificate for school counselors. In 2001, the State of Michigan changed this requirement, and a teaching certificate is no longer required for school counselors. In this study, school counselors perceived that school counselors should be certified as teachers (*M* = 4.27, *SD* = 1.07).

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Awareness of Requirement to Teach About Penalties of Underage Sex in Michigan Schools

Sharie Reznich

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In October of 2003, an amendment to Section 166a (ß388.1766a) of the State School Aid Act, regarding sex education, went into effect. It states:

> *That the sex education instruction includes information clearly informing pupils that having sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16 is a crime punishable by imprisonment, and that 1 of the other results of being convicted of this crime is to be listed on the sex offender registry on the internet for at least 25 years. (p.3)*

Questions surround the implications of this law. Are schools even aware of the law's existence? How has this change been communicated to schools? What are the expectations of how the material is presented? What are the most effective ways to communicate this type of information to students? Does this law have an effect on confidentiality issues? The researcher surveyed 200 Michigan school counselors to gather answers to some of these questions as one step in an effort to improve the health and well-being of Michigan students.

Sex education in schools is often an area of controversy. Families, schools, communities and the legislature often disagree on what is the best for children and adolescents. In the 1970s changes were made to Michigan state law to provide for the teaching of sex education and family planning in public schools (T. Bergstrom, personal communication, March 29, 2004). In the 1980s with the increase in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), more legal requirements regarding the teaching of health and sex

education were implemented. The State of Michigan's State Board of Education published a policy in September 2003 that indicated the importance (and requirement) of schools to work with families and communities for providing sexuality education programs that will influence students to make healthy choices throughout their lives. In October of 2003, an amendment to Section 166a (ß388.1766a) of the State School Aid Act, regarding sex education, went into effect. It states:

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What is sex education? The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) defines sexuality education as "a lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values" (2001, ∂ 2). The same article reports on the aspects of sex education in the home, at school, and continues with information about government's role in sex education (SIECUS).

"The federal government's involvement in sex education has primarily been to provide funding for education programs" reports the Kaiser Family Foundation (2002, p.1). Since 1988 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has included funding for HIV education. All states except Ohio and Utah receive this HIV education funding (Kaiser Family Foundation). The federal government has other sex education funding programs, but most education policy is regulated by states individually.

*T*he results of the 2003 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Michigan Department of Education, 2004) illustrate that a large population (46%) of high school students are sexually active; therefore there are students who are potentially in violation of the Criminal Sexual Conduct Statutes (1931).

Not all states require sex education. Some states, including Michigan, require HIV/STI instruction but not sex education (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2004).

In states that offer sex education, there are significant differences between states regarding what subject matter is taught. In Michigan, as in some other states, if sex education is taught, then there are specific requirements regarding the curriculum that is taught (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002). No record was found of any state other than Michigan having policies concerning the teaching of the penalties of underage sex.

In regard to local school district policy, superintendents cite state directives as the most important factor in determining the sex education curriculum (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2002). Developing sex education curriculum for a district usually involves a representative group of people, including parents, teachers, local health professionals, counselors, and other interested community members. Research has shown that there are some common characteristics for effective sex education programs (Kirby, 2000), but often each of the parties involved has his/her own ideas.

The results of the 2003 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (Michigan Department of Education, 2004) illustrate that a large population (46%) of high school students are sexually active; therefore there are students who are potentially in violation of the Criminal Sexual Conduct Statutes (1931). As reported at the Ramifications of Underage Sex program (Clulo, Allen, Donker, & Duke, 2004), and as discovered through conversations with area school counselors (personal communications, January-April 2004), many high school students are unaware of many of the laws about underage sexual behavior. This may be one reason the Michigan legislature enacted the law to include informing students of the consequences of underage sex as part of their sex education curriculum.

Research Questions

1. Do students share information with their school counselors about their sexual activity?

2. Do school districts have policies regarding confidentiality and when to report and/or call parents about underage sexual activity?

3. Are school counselors aware of the requirement to teach about the penalties of underage sex?

4. Is there school district policy for communication about new legal requirements for schools?

5. Who is responsible for teaching about the penalties of underage sex in various districts?

Method

Questionnaires were sent to 200 Michigan school counselors. The counselors were selected from the Michigan Counseling Association Directory. The

names chosen were those listed as secondary school counselors. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The questionnaire consisted of five questions with space for comments. A stamped pre-addressed envelope was included for ease of return to the researcher. A sample of the questionnaire is in the Appendix.

Results

115 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 59%. Six surveys were returned undeliverable because of incorrect addresses.

Most counselors (84%) surveyed said that students do share information about their sexual activity. There were varied comments to qualify their responses, such as "sometimes," "occasionally," or "if they are active and possibly pregnant." In regards to school district policy about confidentiality and reporting underage sexual activity to parents, results were mixed. 36% of counselors said their school district had a policy, 37% said they did not, and 27% reported they did not know if there was one.

The responses to the question on the survey that asked about the counselor's awareness of the state requirement

Table 1
Survey Responses

Question	Yes	No	Other/ Don't Know
Do students share information with you about their sexual activity?	84%	10%	5%
Does your school district have a policy regarding confidentiality and when to report and/or call parents about underage sexual activity?	36%	37%	27%
Are you (or were you, before receiving this survey) aware of the State of Michigan's requirement for schools to teach about the penalties for underage sex?	60%	40%	N/A
Does your school district have a policy for communication about new legal requirements (of any kind) for schools?	24%	24%	50%

for schools to teach about the penalties for underage sex were split; 60% of the counselors surveyed were aware of the law and 40% were not. The issue of knowledge of district policy regarding communication about legal requirements received 25% Affirmative, 25% Negative and 50% Don't Know answers.

The final question on the survey asked who was responsible for teaching about the penalties for underage sex. The counselors often chose more than one of the options presented and many offered comments. The responses to this question are shown in Table 2. Some of the comments were: "An outside agency comes in-through science class," "I assume," "probably discussed in Health class," and "This year with the new law, sex ed is not being taught at all until further notice."

Table 2
Person Responsible for Teaching Penalties of Underage Sex

Question	Health Teacher	Science Teacher	Gym Teacher	Counselor	Administrator	Non-school employee	Nurse	Don't Know	None
Who in your district is responsible for teaching about the penalties of underage sex?	68%	4%	10%	10%	7%	5%	1%	17%	2%

Note: Respondents sometimes chose more than one person when answering this question.

Discussion

The answer to the central question of this whole study is that most (60%) school counselors are aware of the law that requires schools to teach about the penalties of underage sex. That statistic, though, means that 40% of Michigan school counselors are unaware of the law. The law has been in effect since October 2003.

Michigan State Senator Mike Goschka wrote that "To my knowledge, the manner in which school districts learn of changes or proposed changes to legislation that will directly affect them is through their network of lobbyists" (personal communication, March 19, 2005). He indicated he wasn't sure of the exact channels, whether it would be through the Superintendents' offices or through ISD/ RESDs. Perhaps this issue of communication about new legal requirements is one for administrators, but this particular instance illustrates a reason why the communication should go beyond the administrative staff and those responsible for teaching the specific topic. Counselors are in unique positions in that students often trust them enough to talk about their sexual activity. Even if not legally bound to report underage sexual activity, a counselor would be in an effective position to teach students about the law if they themselves were aware of it.

To answer the question about the *most effective* ways to communicate this information to students would entail another study, but several ideas were submitted with the survey results. Most often cited was that the legal ramifications of underage sex were taught by health teachers in class. They were offered at various grade levels, but other health class curriculum details were not given. Several counselors said that their districts brought in outside speakers. One was from a women's aid shelter and spoke of the law in the context of sexual harassment and relationships. That program was presented to sixth, seventh, and eighth grade health classes. Some districts use local law enforcement officials to give lectures to various grade levels, some annually. In Oakland County, a video was produced and distributed to schools.

The most comprehensive program mentioned by counselors returning the surveys appears to be the one developed by the Midland County Court System, Midland County Prosecutor and Midland Public Schools. Their PowerPoint presentation begins:

This program is designed to provide an explanation of the law that defines criminal sexual conduct, or "CSC," in
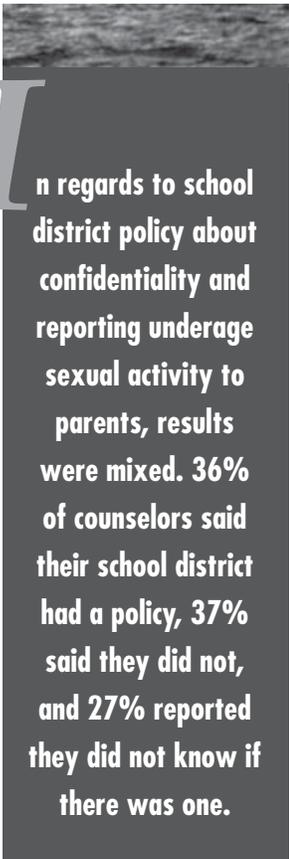
*I*n regards to school district policy about confidentiality and reporting underage sexual activity to parents, results were mixed. 36% of counselors said their school district had a policy, 37% said they did not, and 27% reported they did not know if there was one.

our state. It reflects the belief of both law enforcement and the judiciary that, by understanding the law, Michigan youth can promote respect for self and others, avoid becoming victims, or unwitting perpetrators, of CSC offenses, and help stem the tide of misinformation about these offenses which often exists among their peers. (April, 2004)

In Midland, the presentation by a panel of local professionals is given to school staff and parents first, and then shown to all eighth graders in the district. Linda Weiss, Deputy Court Administrator and Attorney Referee, 42nd Circuit Court in Midland is a resource for anyone interested in coordinating a program for schools in other areas of the state.

One of the easiest suggestions to implement was to include the law in student handbooks and publish it in district newsletters. Although the law indicates that it needs to be taught or be included with sex education instruction, having it printed and available in various formats would be an additional communication tool.

Does the law have an effect on confidentiality issues? The law per se shouldn't affect confidentiality, because it is only about the requirement of schools to teach about the consequences of underage sex. The increased awareness and communication about sexual activity and the law by counselors, school staff, students, and parents may bring up confidentiality concerns. The counselors' answers to the survey question regarding confidentiality and school policy indicates an area many counselors expressed apprehension about. They responded that 27 % didn't know if there was district policy and 37% replied that there was not district policy regarding confidentiality and when to report and/or call parents about underage sexual activity.

One survey respondent replied, "We are required to inform parents-I ask the student to do it to take responsibility." A few other counselors gave similar comments, illustrating that some districts do have policy that directs counselors to break confidentiality regarding underage sexual activity. Another school district's policy states that information shared with a counselor does not need to be shared with anyone including parents unless the student's health or well-being is in danger. District policy can help make this very gray area a little clearer.

From a legal standpoint, Assistant Prosecutor J. D. Brooks of Midland said in most situations, consensual sex

between teenagers does not need to be reported (April, 2004). It is not a violation of the Child Protection Law of which counselors are mandatory reporters. It is important to know the Criminal Sexual Conduct Laws and be able to talk with students about them and the possible consequences of violating them. As reported by Mitchell and Rogers (2003), "if school counselors find themselves knowledgeable of situations where age discrepancies between mutually consenting sexual partners are questionable, they should call their local department of child services or prosecuting attorney and present a hypothetical case describing the circumstances" (p.336).

The question of confidentiality with parents isn't so clear. Again, if there is district policy, a counselor should refer to it. The American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) position statement on the professional school counselor and parental consent states, "It is the responsibility of the professional school counselor to reach an agreement with the student concerning the information to be shared with the parent unless there is clear and imminent danger to the student or others as specified in ASCA's Ethical Standards for School Counselors" (2004, ∂4). This position could be argued legally, because in most cases, the right to consent belongs to the parent. Behnke and Warner (2002) refer to Ethics Code to reach for the answers in light of the apparent conflict between the law and "good clinical treatment." When deciding what is in the best interest of the student, it is most important to know the "mandatory reporting requirements and to be liberal in the use of consultation" (p.2).

In all instances, the need for informed consent or clear explanations of the limits of confidentiality can not be overemphasized. Communication of these should be done routinely with students during initial sessions and publicized in student handbooks and other materials that are distributed to parents. A sign posted in the school counselor's office could be referred to on a regular basis.

Summary

The health and well-being of students is a counselor's top priority. Sexual activity impacts a teenager's health and well-being. A school counselor is in a unique position in that students often trust them enough to confide in them about their sexual activity; therefore, a counselor needs to be aware of any legal and ethical concerns they may encounter in counseling sexually active students. The law about teaching the penalties of underage sex is just one example of why it is important to keep abreast of new laws and district policies. Involvement with administrators and other school staff in the development of a Sexuality/Health Education curriculum would be valuable for a counselor and the students that he or she serves. Continuing education and consultation with colleagues and supervisors will keep a counselor informed and prepared to meet the special needs of today's young people.

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Appendix

Survey for Michigan School Counselors

1. **Do students share information with you about their sexual activity?** Yes_____ No_____

    Comments_____

2. **Does your school district have a policy regarding confidentiality and when to report and/or call parents about underage sexual activity?** Yes_____ No_____ Don't Know_____

    Comments_____

3. **Are you (or were you, before receiving this survey) aware of the State of Michigan's requirement for schools to teach about the penalties for underage sex?** Yes_____ No_____

    Comments_____

4. **Does your school district have a policy for communication about new legal requirements (of any kind) for schools?** Yes_____ No_____ Don't Know_____

    Comments_____

5. Who in your district is responsible for teaching about the penalties of underage sex?

    Health teacher_____ Science teacher_____ Gym teacher_____ Counselor_____

    Administrator_____ Non-school employee_____ Don't Know_____

    Comments_____

    Any comments or details about policies or programs that you feel might benefit other districts would be welcome:

    _____

    _____

    _____

    Please return in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope

    (by ———————). Thank You!

Teaching a Doctoral Course in Consultation: The Parallel Team Process

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A parallel team model of teaching consultation is presented. The model highlights experiential group counseling theory, techniques, and Yalom's (1995) identified group therapeutic factors.

The goal was to increase the students' awareness and knowledge of consultation skills and teamwork in order to model and teach the same skills. The parallel interaction between the consultant and consultee teams is illustrated during the consultation stages of entry, problem/strength identification (diagnosis), intervention, and evaluation. The learning experience stimulated ideas for teaching consultation and the parallel team process.

*A*lthough consultation is not a specific course requirement for counseling programs that are approved by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001) CACREP does require knowledge in consulting skills (Davis, 2003). Consultation is an important function of counselors, as evidenced in the work of Morrill, Oetting, and Hurst (1974). Morrill, Oetting, and Hurst designed a three dimensional cube referred to as "The Thirty-Six Faces of Counseling," in which one method of intervention, consultation and training, appears in 12 faces of the cube. Shullman (2002) states, "consultation can be targeted for individuals, primary groups, associational groups, and institutions or communities, and it can be conducted for the purposes of remediation, prevention, or development" (p. 244).

According to French and Bell (1999), an important characteristic of organizational consultants is interpersonal competence. Similarly, Yalom (1995) highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships in group work. Counselors are well equipped to improve the performance of organizational groups because they are well trained in relationship skills and group dynamics. However, counselor education students often lack opportunities to practice and generalize their interpersonal group counseling skills. Through group discussions, the course instructor (senior author) determined that many graduate counseling students believe they lack knowledge about organizational functioning, and therefore are hesitant to approach human service agencies or business organizations for consulting opportunities. One explanation for this lack of confidence may be attributed to counseling practicum and internship classes that typically do not include consulting work experiences.

The purpose of the doctoral course in consultation was to teach and demonstrate how students could use group and individual counseling skills in organizational consultation. The design of this course was to present organizational consultation theory, principles, and techniques to the students using weekly seminars and, most importantly, to provide an experiential consulting component. This would supply the students with an opportunity to utilize their developing knowledge and acquired skills by performing organizational consultation for an agency that was experiencing difficulties in its organization.

The class project began when a student team member telephoned the director of an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) unit, a community mental health program (CMH) in the Midwest, and asked if the unit would be willing to have a group of doctoral students provide consultation. Typically, ACT teams in CMH programs consist of individuals from a variety of professions, often reflecting distinct disciplinary and/or social cultures. The challenge for these professionals is to combine their knowledge in order to work closely together to create solutions for persons with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) living in the community. Allred, Burns, and Phillips (2005) state, "an effective ACT team operates as a single unit of expertise that continuously organizes and reorganizes itself in response to client needs" (p. 213). One barrier to widespread implementation of ACT units is the lack of attention given to organizational team dynamics: Communication,

*A*n additional educational purpose that was not planned but became an important factor was the increased awareness of parallel learning structures. The theory is that when teams work together, they mirror each other, and understanding this process helps increase the functioning and effectiveness of teams.

decision-making, and/or leadership (Corrigan, Steiner, McCracken, Blaser, & Barr, 2001).

The director of the ACT unit was interested in improving the performance of two of the agency's ACT teams and responded affirmatively. Thus, the consultation task was to facilitate the performance of

these teams. It was decided to place the students in two teams so they could experience what it was like to develop an effective team. Although not originally planned, having two teams became the stimulus for teaching the teamwork process on two levels simultaneously. At this point, the class became a working organization which would be helping another working organization. This would provide learning on two levels, and students could see their own group issues parallel to those in the agency. It was hoped that both class groups would grow toward higher team performance and would use their knowledge of group theory, process, techniques, and therapeutic factors to work as teams who could assist the organizational teams to become cohesive and well-functioning.

Parallel Process

An additional educational purpose that was not planned but became an important factor was the increased awareness of parallel learning structures. The theory is that when teams work together, they mirror each other, and understanding this process helps increase the functioning and effectiveness of teams. Smith and Zane (1999) advise consultants to self reflect on how their own behavior mirrors the behaviors to be changed. When two systems have significant relationships with each other, they frequently develop similar affects, cognitions, and behaviors (Aldefer, Brown, Kaplan, & Smith, 1990). These parallel processes can begin in several ways and influence relationships between individuals and groups. Thus, understanding the parallel process between student and organizational teams can facilitate recognition of team dynamics and promote development of appropriate interventions. Student teams that can talk about and recognize their process can work more effectively with consultee teams who may be experiencing similar processes. This communication and process recognition was the essence of the parallel team process that guided the doctoral consultation class.

Teamwork

Today, many social service organizations are utilizing and empowering work teams to improve organizational functioning. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) identified several important team building concepts: 1) smaller groups operate more effectively and efficiently; 2) identified purposes and goals provide direction for a team; 3) identification of personal competencies (technical, problem solving and interpersonal) enable team members to choose roles that fit; 4) mutual accountability promotes equal sharing of work assignments; and 5) commitment leads to fulfillment of the goals. Experts believe that work teams can be the building foundations of organizations (French & Bell, 1999). The predominant view is that teams need to manage their relationships and work processes to be effective. The assumption is that when work teams are empowered, performance as well as work satisfaction is increased and performance is greater. Hackman and Oldham (1980) indicate that self-managed work teams are a powerful social invention, and in a moderately supportive organizational context, they can accomplish significant alterations in work performance and organizational management.

The helpful elements that enable teams to function effectively are similar to Yalom's (1995) group therapeutic factors. Team members need to understand their tasks and goals and share their knowledge and training, which can be likened to imparting information. When the team members share their common knowledge and experience, it is similar to universality. Team members responding to each other is more effective than learning alone, similar to the feedback process in group counseling. Team members encouraging and stimulating each other resembles the instillation of hope that group members need to motivate each other. Team members need to broaden attitudes and values that develop the skills and commitment to work together and do jobs well, which can be compared to the social skills and interpersonal competence emphasized in group counseling. Learning how to do a job well affects team members' views of themselves, similar to the identity development and empowerment that occurs in groups. When team members help each other in these ways, altruism supports group members' team effort and performance. When these therapeutic factors operate in teams, cohesiveness, which is needed for high performance, develops. The following are the group skills which enable teams to operate effectively: Staying in the present, using "I," talking directly to each other, encouraging participation of all group members, giving and receiving feedback, processing how the group works together, and identifying individual and group goals.

Consultation Stages

Throughout the consultation stages of entry, diagnoses, intervention, and evaluation, the student teams were able to study and monitor their own team functioning as well as the organizational teams.

Entry

During the initial meeting, the student team members identified the information and tasks

needed to guide the consultation. They agreed that the important steps included: (1) developing a working relationship; (2) learning the history of the agency and the departmental structure; (3) gaining an understanding of the organization's culture; and (4) assisting management and the teams to identify areas that needed improvement.

The overall goal was to help the ACT teams and the CMH administration learn to identify and solve their own problems. Using a collaborative consultation model, the students perceived the consultees as experts and worked to develop an egalitarian relationship with them. This followed Hanson, Himes, and Meier's (1990) recommendation that the first step in consultation is to define the consultant and consultee relationship. Redmon, Cullari, and Farris (1985) highlighted the importance of identifying all organization levels in the consultation process and assuring all are represented. In addition, the researchers recommended individual, confidential sessions for all levels, during which the nature of the consultation process is communicated.

Structurally, the ACT department was comprised of two teams. Each team had six case managers. Both teams were led by one supervisor and the department director. The doctoral consultant teams planned individual interviews with the director and supervisor, and all the consultee team members. These steps would hopefully facilitate the establishment of open relationships that would promote the sharing and identification of team struggles and conflicts. The doctoral students planned to continue the consultation process with group meetings for more problem identification, feedback, and intervention strategies.

A critical event surfaced in the first meeting with the director of the ACT team. She seemed uncomfortable being in a small room with four new people. She moved the meeting to a larger room and asked the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) supervisor to join the group. These actions surprised the consulting team because the new location did not provide privacy, compromised confidentiality, and interfered with the team's plan for individual interviews. The data gathering process was interrupted by several agency employees

who walked in and out of the room and overheard management discuss concerns about the ACT teams. As a result, several employees looked at the consultant team members suspiciously, as if they were conspiring with agency

management. In retrospect, the consultant team could have asked that the meeting be moved to a more private area. The director and the supervisor may have then disclosed more, and the trust level that the consultants needed to develop with team members might have been supported.

The student consultants learned that the purpose of the ACT program was to help persons with mental illness maintain emotional stability and adjust to community life. The director and the supervisor outlined the agency's needs: 1) to increase the ACT teams' problem solving abilities and cohesiveness; 2) to increase the team members' ability to protect themselves while working with clients who were occasionally threatening; 3) to increase the personal and professional growth of the case managers; and 4) to decrease the teams' dependence on supervision.

In the initial interviews with ACT members it was learned that there was a lack of clarity about the purpose of the consultation, the team leaders, and the nature of their roles. The consultants also discovered that the ACT members had been told the consultation was related to nursing, not organizational development. One team leader was a case manager who also attended administrative meetings. Her dual role was confusing to the team members. In a parallel manner, the student consultation teams were also perplexed. They did not know who would be the team members or leaders in their own groups, making it unclear how they would interact and share the workload. Group and individual goals had not been identified. This may be attributed to the teams' lack of experience, which caused anxiety and uncertainty.

The student teams observed that one ACT team was more interactive and effective than the other. One team's members were eager to help and support each other, while the other team experienced interpersonal difficulties, reportedly with members working separately from one another. An actual partition dividing the members of this team physically created a communication barrier.

A process similar to the agency's groups was observed among the class teams. While one student team's
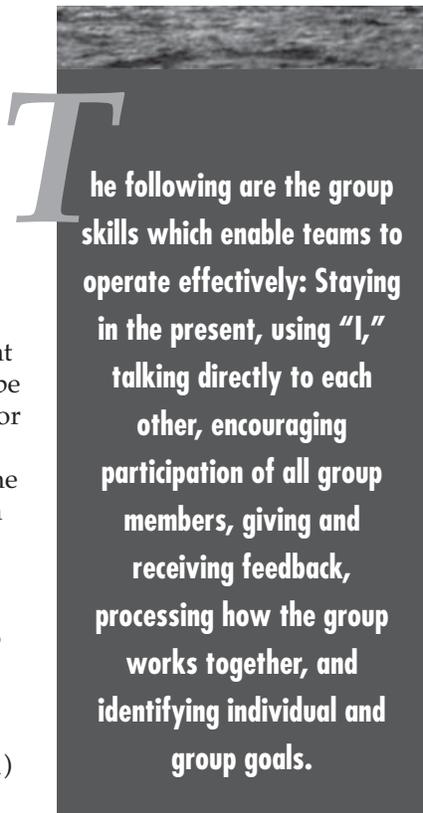
*T*he following are the group skills which enable teams to operate effectively: Staying in the present, using "I," talking directly to each other, encouraging participation of all group members, giving and receiving feedback, processing how the group works together, and identifying individual and group goals.

members worked well together, sharing responsibilities and rotating leadership, the other team's members struggled to communicate without being misunderstood. One student did not believe that she had a role on the team, and another perceived some team members as not sharing information. Each team chose one team leader, which caused conflict, because several students had leadership abilities and struggled with the chosen leader's team management. Some members did not actively participate in the discussions or in doing their share of the work. Beginning recognition of the parallel process facilitated the students' deeper understanding about team conflict and motivated a search for problem-solving interventions.

Problem/Strength Identification

The student consultation teams decided to use the term "problem identification," as opposed to diagnosis, which usually relates to mental health services rather than organizational functioning. They also focused on identifying the strengths and opportunities within the organization. This identification process began with entry and did not end until evaluation because consultants can identify problems, strengths, and possible interventions within every phase of consultation.

While gathering data about the history, culture, and goals of the organization, the class teams discovered the agency administering the program had changed from a county service to a private non-profit mental health facility. Stress, anxiety, and safety were critical issues related to the difficult population the organization served. Job security was also a concern, because reduced funding had resulted in several layoffs and high worker turnover. Similar to the organizational teams, several students from the consultation teams expressed frustration and anxiety about the doctoral program. The university was experiencing a budget crisis, which had reduced the number of counselor education faculty. Students believed there were not enough professors to provide different perspectives, advice, or feedback. These similar feelings and reactions of the students and ACT members were further illustrations of the parallel process.

The director and supervisor of the ACT teams readily gave time to the consultation project. Their effort demonstrated that management as well as employees were motivated and recognized a need for change. Most ACT members showed a similar willingness and

motivation by making themselves available for interviews, despite several ACT team members' skepticism about whether the consultation would be successful. The consultees' cooperation with the student consultants was identified as a strength of the organization.

The doctoral student teams also evaluated their cooperation and commitment to the consultation project. They questioned whether team members would be willing to schedule meetings outside the university setting. One member stated he had limited time outside of class to visit the agency and conduct an individual interview. He requested permission to do a telephone consultation. The professor rejected this request, because it could convey less importance to the organizational team member and undermine the other students' efforts. Although several agreed with the professor's action, his authoritarian decision triggered team tension. Both the student and organizational teams were dealing with issues of motivation and commitment. The recognition of these parallel concerns maximized the students' learning process.

Overall, several ACT members felt insufficiently prepared to work with their clients. A major fear related to safety issues working with potentially violent clients who could possess weapons. Some members stated they would feel safer working in pairs or wearing a device with a panic button. Many requested additional training in self-defense and physical management techniques. In parallel fashion, the student teams verbalized concern about their ability to apply consultation theory within an organization. One student stated, "I am not certain if I have sufficient knowledge of consultation," and another student indicated, "I know how to counsel, but to take on the role of a consultant is unfamiliar ground." It was helpful for team members to learn that others were experiencing the same feelings (universality). At this point, the professor underlined that obtaining experiential knowledge would assist them in learning how to generalize their counseling skills to organizational consultation. This helped allay their doubts and increased hope that they could help these teams and the agency.

After summarizing the data, attention was focused on the difficulties and strengths within the organization. The concerns identified were: 1) understaffed teams; 2) insufficient time and space to debrief from crisis experiences; and 3) lack of clerical support for the heavy paper workload, decreasing interaction with clients. Some organizational (ACT) team members did not object to the new time requirement for computer input of client information, while others thought it was time consuming, tedious, and an added stressor in their daily workload. The areas perceived positively were: 1) communication

among (ACT) team members; 2) supervisor support; 3) positive feedback between members; and 4) commitment to the program and population the group served. There was consensus that their work with clients was meaningful and goal directed.

Like the ACT teams, student difficulties and strengths were also reviewed. Problem identification included: 1) difficulties with sharing information; 2) leadership struggles; 3) feelings of exclusion; and 4) time constraints. The strengths were: 1) mutual goals; 2) freedom to disagree; 3) energy to resolve problems; 4) students' establishment of an e-mail network facilitating communication; and 5) recognition of doubts about their confidence.

Interventions

All planned activities that occurred during the stages of entry, problem identification and evaluation are considered interventions. Following the individual interviews, group meetings were implemented with each ACT team separately. Specific group interventions utilized during this consultation process included team building activities, such as giving and receiving corrective feedback and "Sharing Appreciation and Concerns." Members voiced appreciation for each other's help and support during their daily activities and crisis situations. Examples of their reinforcing statements were: "good job" and "that sounds like a great idea." These positive reactions enhanced feelings of recognition and cohesiveness. They expressed respect for each other's working styles and wanted more opportunities to share their approaches with each other. These group appreciation exercises increased the likelihood the ACT team members would share more in the future and contribute to a climate of team support.

In a parallel fashion, the two class teams repeated some of the same interventions: Giving and receiving feedback, and sharing thoughts and concerns. An exercise in which members formed a circle and threw a ball to one another was suggested by one team and was conducted during class. The receiver would tell the thrower what was respected and valued about the group member. One student paused and could not devise a positive statement about another group member. She stated, "I don't feel as though you are committed to this group." The student was able to receive that honest feedback constructively and was able to reevaluate his role in the group.

Through consultation, the ACT teams and administrators (supervisor and director) were learning how to identify their own problems and strengths. This experience may have enabled them to consider their own interventions in the future to improve team functioning and program effectiveness. Larson and Mafasto (1989) underlined the

need for administrative support and leadership. Therefore, the students developed a summary report and met with the program director and supervisor to review the progress of the consultation. The feedback provided opportunities for administration to validate data, increase their awareness of teams' issues, and develop solutions.

Following these meetings, the two doctoral student teams and the course professor met with the two ACT teams, the program director and supervisor, in one large group.

The purpose was to share the consultants' findings about the ACT program's needs and strengths, to discuss the intervention recommendations, and prepare tentative plans for implementation. In this meeting, the ACT members gave feedback to each other, and shared concerns such as safety issues. This process appeared to reduce communication barriers, increase group unity and morale, and the group collaboration gave the students a sense of accomplishment in their consultation project. Most importantly, the students appeared to learn the process and techniques of developing solutions and building team cohesiveness.

Evaluation

Evaluation of the effects of a parallel team approach to teaching and conducting consultation required a systematic gathering of information. It was an ongoing process applied throughout the consulting process and concluded with evaluation of outcomes. Learning about process and outcome evaluation required several primary skills for both the student and organizational teams: 1) the ability to monitor the team process; 2) the ability to monitor their role within the team; 3) the ability to identify intervention outcomes; and 4) the ability to establish criteria for change and goal attainment.

Process evaluation of all the teams revealed parallel concerns, particularly during the entry and problem identification stages. Both student and organizational teams struggled with issues of belonging, communication, member/leader role confusion, lack of clear consultation goals, conflicting schedules, and authority issues. As a result of looking at the parallel process, the students learned more about team and organizational dynamics. They learned the value of open communication, giving and receiving feedback, the importance of monitoring their own group processes, and
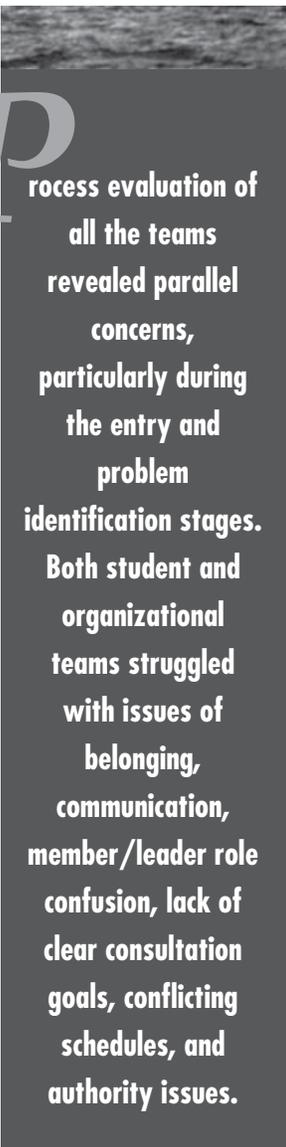
*P*rocess evaluation of all the teams revealed parallel concerns, particularly during the entry and problem identification stages. Both student and organizational teams struggled with issues of belonging, communication, member/leader role confusion, lack of clear consultation goals, conflicting schedules, and authority issues.

thus were empowered to develop interventions that addressed parallel team problems.

Outcome evaluation identified the changes resulting from consultation. The administration and organizational teams made several substantive changes. These included: 1) increasing safety training sessions; 2) instituting monthly ACT staff meetings; 3) implementing bonuses and merit raises; and 4) securing funds for the entire ACT program staff to attend the national ACT conference. A dramatic event occurred when one team's members removed the partition in their office that had previously created a physical and communicative barrier. Despite the fact that empirical data were not collected, the process and outcome changes fulfilled the original consultation goals of increased team effectiveness and cohesiveness.

On the other hand, some recommendations were not implemented. For example, the ACT teams wanted a more efficient documentation system. The program director and supervisor shared the constraining rules governing all mental health programs funded by the state. Thus, the ACT teams were able to accept that changes in the documentation system were not possible. Although this problem was not solved, the discussion increased the organizational teams' understanding of the difficulties faced by the director and supervisor.

Congruently, changes occurred within the doctoral consultation teams. The students learned early in the project that their communication breakdown threatened the success of the consultation project. Due to varying class schedules and job responsibilities, several students felt excluded from the important information and decision-making processes within the teams. One positive outcome was the group's ability to listen to an alienated team member's frustration about not belonging. This member stated, "I don't feel close to anyone." Listening and open communication were two interventions that led to his sense of inclusion. After this student voiced dissatisfaction, the team was able to identify other members experiencing the same feelings. The ball throwing exercise opened communication barriers and shed light on difficulties between members. This led to the member stating, "I feel closer to this group." These examples demonstrate how student teams similar to the organizational teams developed problem-solving interventions without suggestions from outside sources.

Parallel Team Process of Teaching Consultation: Discussion and Recommendations

To perform a more empirical evaluation, a pre and post likert type assessment instrument could be employed. The doctoral students, consultees, and administration would assess their knowledge of consultation and teamwork before and after the consultation. The same groups, as well as the professor, would also rate the effectiveness of the consultation. Desirably, the groups would be open to doing the outcome measure six months later to assess whether effects persisted or were helping them in the present.

The parallel team learning process enabled the students to identify similar behaviors occurring in the ACT teams and the class consultation teams. The students increased their learning about group interpersonal dynamics, and both teams were able to discover and implement their own interventions for team building and growth, which seemed to increase self-esteem and team empowerment.

The professor utilized several critical team-building elements for evaluation of the parallel team teaching project. One, the class consultation teams of five met the standard of being small enough to operate effectively and efficiently. Two, although the class team's members were clear that the goal was to assist in the improvement of the two agency teams, several purposes were not stated: to operate effectively as a team; to monitor the team members' own learning process; to perform well; to obtain a superior grade (A); and finally, for each team member to make a unique individual contribution to the team. Greater awareness of these purposes may have increased the teams' effectiveness. Typically, the purposes provide the direction and goals for a team.

Three, the key team building element of commitment was met in varying degrees by the class teams. Recognizing positive changes in the agency from the consultation project increased the students' commitment. It is recommended that professors, administrators, and team members monitor the ongoing process to increase commitment. Four, it is also critical that members are chosen on the basis of their complementary abilities and not on compatibility or status (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993). Greater attention could have been focused on this teambuilding element. If the professor had identified the skills needed for the project, such as technical, problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills, the prospective team members may have chosen more appropriate team roles. When deciding on the roles, tasks, and goals, it is important that each function require an equivalent amount of work, since student resentment is typical when a member relies on others to do the work. It

is recommended that the team discuss these matters, and that each member share how he or she will be accountable to the team.

Gutkin and Curtis (1982) suggested that consultation models are comprised of two goals. One is to focus on existing problems, and the other is to increase consultees' skills so they can be effective in the future. These dual goals identified by these experts were congruent with the consultation project: To assist the agency with its present problems, and to train members to manage their organizational difficulties in the future. Similarly, the learning experience increased the doctoral students' consulting and group skills and empowered them to become future counselor/consultants.

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