1-1-1995

Generating a handbook for school adjustment counseling services in schools : a systemic perspective.

Carole G. Siegel
University of Massachusetts Amherst

GENERATING A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELING
SERVICES IN SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation Presented

by

CAROLE G. SIEGEL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 1995

School of Education

GENERATING A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELING
SERVICES IN SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

A Dissertation Presented

by

CAROLE G. SIEGEL

Approved as to style and content by:

_____
John Wideman, Chairperson

_____
Doris Shallcross, Ph.D., Member

_____
Theodore Slovin, Ph.D., Member

_____
Bailey W. Jackson, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

IN APPRECIATION

to

Dr. John W. Wideman

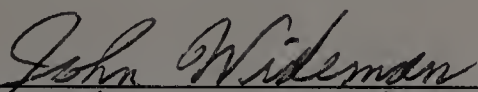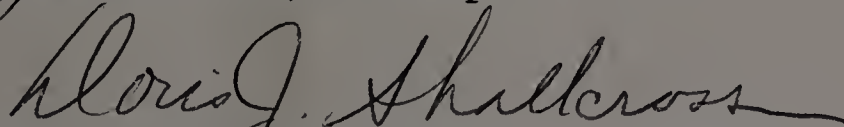for his never-failing support and his belief in my work

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

GENERATING A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELING
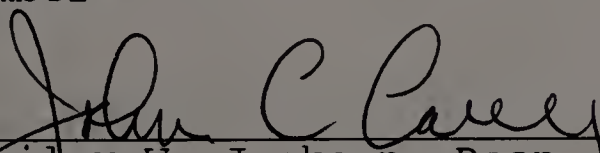SERVICES IN SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

MAY 1995

CAROLE G. SIEGEL, B.A., SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

M.Ed., NORTH ADAMS STATE COLLEGE

Ed.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: John W. Wideman, Ed.D.

Although school adjustment counseling has existed in
the schools of Massachusetts since 1952, there has been no
resource guide or handbook which has guided the work.
Because of the increased demands put upon schools to meet
the complex emotional needs of our students, the job has
grown, but without a clear sense of direction or approach
to the work.

The writer believed that there was a need for a
handbook for persons studying to become school adjustment
counselors, persons recently hired as school adjustment
counselors, and perhaps even persons already in the field.
A handbook was developed dealing with school adjustment
counseling from a systemic perspective enhanced with some
aspects of Carl Rogers' philosophy. The handbook is not a
comprehensive cookbook of all aspects of school adjustment
counseling, but rather it is a discussion of an approach.
Activities for dealing with individuals, groups,
classrooms, staff, parents, and the general community are
included from the writer's personal experiences with these

activities.   Twenty-five people read the handbook,
including new school adjustment counselors, experienced
school adjustment counselors, people in training to become
school adjustment counselors, school personnel in related
fields and administrators.   After reading the handbook,
they completed a matrix and a questionnaire.   Their
responses were overwhelmingly positive.   Based on the
responses, the writer plans to revise and expand the
handbook with hopes of it being a factor in enhancing the
training for the field and preserving the uniqueness of the
position.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table

C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Since early in the twentieth century there has been some recognition that children come to school with their problems and that those problems might interfere with learning. (Sarri, 1972, p.5.) In recognition of that reality, even in the early years of the twentieth century, schools hired social workers to help children cope with their problems. Massachusetts did not have the title of School Adjustment Counselor until 1952, when the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services began to fund this position in schools for the express purpose of keeping students with problems, at that time called juvenile delinquents, out of jail.

The focus of the position has shifted frequently throughout the century, in the early years assuming a more developmental perspective "focusing on emotion, motivation, and personality." (Sarri, 1972, p.5.) As the years progressed, most of the country, including Massachusetts, began to view the position in a much more clinical fashion, more geared to dysfunction. There is currently some interest in considering a more developmental or preventive approach to helping children in schools, an approach this writer will call systemic. It does not preclude helping individual children in the school setting but maintains a perspective of looking at the many systems that affect students' lives and

educations and considers all of them as the focus of the school adjustment counselor's work.

This writer has not found in the literature any volume for dealing with the many aspects of the school adjustment counselor's job. The writer hopes to develop such a volume as part of this dissertation.

Background

We who are interested in children's development are living in difficult times.

As we progress through the last decade of the twentieth century, tomes are being written about our children's lack of preparedness for the world of the twenty-first century. State legislatures, departments of education, and local school committees are grappling with reform of education acts; newspapers and periodicals overflow with articles on the inadequacies of the educational system. Many writers offer plans for major reform of the educational system. Some communities, in total frustration over the perceived failures of the education system, have even contracted with private-for-profit businesses to run their schools.

Simultaneously, and seemingly in direct opposition, state and local governments all over the United States are slashing school budgets drastically. At the moment of this writing, there are continuous examples of government's frustrations with the realities of the contemporary educational establishment, and its seeming inability to

address the needs appropriately. A new law increases the amount of time students must spend in school while providing no additional funding. To meet that requirement, teachers will lose their professional development time, and students will lose some of their support services at the very time teachers need more training to cope with the ever-increasing complexities of our students' lives, and students need support to help them cope with the ever-increasing complexities of their lives.

The serious concern about our students' lack of preparation for the year 2000 on the one hand, and simultaneous announcements of dramatic decreases in funding for education on the other hand, exist at a time when "changing family patterns and the diminishing cultural supports of church and community associations have left a vacuum" (Fuller, 1990, p. 4). There has been a lack of consensus as to who is responsible for filling this vacuum. While educators, legislators, and social services discuss the dilemma, the problems of our young people have significantly increased.

The statistics, published by the Massachusetts Department of Education in 1990, speak for themselves:

> In Massachusetts, as in much of the nation, suicide has become the second leading cause of death for 18-24 year olds. ("Child Death in Massachusetts, Massachusetts Department of Health, July, 1988.)

The number of children who were found to be physically or sexually abused in Massachusetts rose from 12,730 in 1983 to

18,295 in 1986--a 42% increase (Child Abuse and Neglect: A Fact Sheet, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, 1987).

Although alcohol and drug use has declined in recent years, 80% of teens in Massachusetts have tried alcoholic beverages with about 33% reporting having five or more drinks on one occasion during two weeks ("Drug Use Among Massachusetts High School Students," Massachusetts Department of Health, 1987). Seventy percent of the adolescents in Massachusetts reported that they were sexually active, but only 15% of the sexually active reported changing their behavior because of concern about contracting AIDS, and only 20% of those used effective means. (Strunin and Hingson, 1986-88.)

Just under 7000 children were born to girls 17 and under in Massachusetts in 1985 ("A Call For Action to Make Our Nation Safe For Children: A Briefing on the Status of Children in 1988, Children's Defense Fund).

In Massachusetts, 19.5% of students who begin ninth grade do not graduate from high school. In some urban areas, the rate approaches 50% (Massachusetts Drop-Out Report for 1986-87, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1986-87).

Students spend thirty hours a week in school. With all of its problems, this is still the one institution which exists for most children. It seems that as one of the few remaining institutions, schools must be involved in students' lives. Involvement means, this writer believes, involvement

with students' emotional, social, and physical development, as well as with their intellectual development. For some of those students, the essential factor is in supplying that significant "other", a person, be it a teacher, a counselor, or a peer, who can help make the difference between success and failure. For other students, the task is to make the school environment more welcoming, more "user-friendly" (to use a 1980s phrase). Some of those students are helped by changing aspects of their environment or by helping them to perceive themselves differently in that environment.

There is hardly a day when some significant leader does not speak of the necessity to deal with students' social and emotional needs and problems in order for them to learn. On April 20, 1991, the Chancellor of the New York City public school system, Joseph A. Fernandez, spoke at Williams College on "Education in Urban America" as the final lecture in the John M. Olin Distinguished Speakers Program in Leadership and Public Policy. In that speech, he stressed the need to integrate education and social services in meeting the needs of students.

He talked of the dilemma for urban schools, beset with increasing social problems among their students, while simultaneously hampered by constricted public purse strings. He said the schools must pursue their academic goals with heightened vigor, must seriously collaborate with social agencies, and must accept the challenge of dealing with the complicated world of today's students. According to

Fernandez, "it should be the schools because they have the students."

In response to a questioner who took the position that students' social problems were not in the schools' purview, Fernandez commented that "we obviously have a serious disagreement." "Whether we like it or not," he said, "youngsters who are not helped in school often either end up on welfare or in prison, where it costs $27,000 a year to keep them."

In spite of all that is said about the increasing stresses on children, the growing acceptance that the school is the one place outside of the home that has access to all children, and the acceptance by the schools (although reluctantly) of increased responsibilities for such things as referrals for possible child abuse and/or suicidality, there is no clarity or consistency throughout the country, or even throughout Massachusetts, as to who in the school is the primary resource for dealing with these issues. There is not even agreement as to what to call this person; how should some of the issues be handled; or should they be handled at all. There is no agreement on the background and training of the person if, in fact, there is a person to fill this function. This writer believes that the school adjustment counselor is that person.

There is, however, an ongoing debate in the Massachusetts School Adjustment Counseling Association concerning the certification of new school adjustment

counselors. There are some who think the position should
have a more educational focus and be included within the
Department of Education, and these are a much larger and more
vociferous group, who are advocating an increasingly clinical
orientation for the position. They want additional required
course work in mental dysfunction.

This writer disagrees with both orientations, although
she believes both points of view have some merit. The
essential error in the thinking of the two groups is that
they both fail to take into account the uniqueness of the
school adjustment counseling position. Those who favor
increased course work in mental dysfunction and abnormal
psychology are correct in their contention that school
adjustment counselors may have to deal with students with
serious behavior disorders, even psychotic episodes.
Frequently, counselors need to make preliminary assessments
on suicidality. They need to understand much about substance
abuse and about the presenting characteristics of children of
alcoholics. They need to be aware of symptoms of sexual and
physical abuse so that they can make appropriate referrals.

However, they must perform all of these clinical
functions within the context of the school. The school
setting is very different from the mental health center. A
clinically trained psychiatric social worker may be
unsuccessful in the school setting if he/she performs the
tasks of his/her job as he/she would in a mental health
center.

Conversely, a school adjustment counselor who understands schools, and the role of counseling in the educational milieu, will still not be successful if he/she doesn't have enough clinical knowledge to be able to make preliminary assessments or be able to function as a resource to staff on the many mental health concerns our students present in school.

The effective school adjustment counselor, this writer believes, needs to combine these points of view, and needs to possess a systemic perspective; understanding how the classroom operates as a system; how the school operates as a system; and how the school fits into the system of the larger community.

Nowhere in the literature has this writer found a volume which deals with the total role of the school adjustment counselor.

Most of the school adjustment counselor's training tries to fit the counselor into already-established social work or guidance counselor roles.

The job can most definitely stand on its own merits. Too often one detects an almost apologetic tone as to whether a school adjustment counselor is a "real" social worker or a "real" guidance counselor. It is neither. This writer believes that it is a very special position which combines clinical mental health skills; social work case management; teaching ability to work with groups of students, staff and

parents; and a systemic understanding of the educational milieu and its place within the larger community.

There is a basic difference between school adjustment counseling and mental health counseling which takes place in other settings. This difference emanates from the basic mission of the school. The school's role is primarily to develop children, not "fix" them, as is the mandate of mental health settings. The school's primary function is to provide an environment where children are free to learn. The school adjustment counselor's role in that system is to minimize obstacles which inhibit that freedom, or put another way, to help maximize the learning environment. It has been well established that increased societal stresses and changing family dynamics have significantly increased the stresses on contemporary children. In some cases the emotional baggage gets in the way of students' educational progress. For these students, individual, group, and/or family counseling may be appropriate.

In other cases, there may be a problem with the atmosphere in a classroom, or the entire school may be dealing with a problem such as a death of a student or staff member, or a shutdown of a local industry. More and more often, the teachers and administrators need a safe place to vent their frustration at needing to impart increasingly voluminous and complex information to an increasingly problematic student body in an atmosphere punctuated most drastically by slashed budgets.

Thus, the job of the school adjustment counselor has become more and more complex, both in meeting the demands of more students needing services and of school staff members who must deal with these needy students. Teachers and administrators look to the counselor for information and support at a time when their own self-esteem may be diminished through job insecurity as well as a feeling of powerlessness in the community at large.

The Problem

Communities look to the schools as the one institution which still has large sway in students' lives, to help people, children and their families cope with the many problems they face. Teachers and administrators need education and support to help them handle these increased expectations. The school often needs to assume leadership in helping the community handle the problems. Often the school finds itself needing to be the mirror for the community or the catalyst to get things done. As stated above, this writer believes that the school adjustment counselor can be a very effective catalyst in helping the school and community meet expectations and handle problems.

The context of the times has helped to change the function of the school adjustment counselor dramatically. The position has evolved from its early days in the 1950's when school adjustment counselors were hired under the auspices of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services

to keep court-involved youth out of jail and/or to help
teens returning from incarceration to stay in school, to a
position impacting many more, if not all, students in the
school.

So the school adjustment counselor who may have been
trained clinically as a social worker and who may have
expected to work intensely with a small caseload of
students needing social work intervention to succeed in
school, finds himself/herself needing to be a change agent,
needing to be a spokesperson, needing to be a resource and
support for staff.

There are many books, pamphlets, and tapes dealing
with some aspect of the problems our students face. There
are many materials available on some aspect of the "how-to"
in doing, for example, group counseling or parent
education. However, there does not seem to be any one
volume which provides a framework for a new school
adjustment counselor as to how to do the job.

The problem addressed in this study is the lack of any
resource in the literature to guide the work and the
training of school adjustment counselors or other support
persons in the school who are asked to take on this role
and function.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, then, is to generate a
handbook which will be useful to school adjustment

counselors, social workers, guidance counselors, other school mental health professionals, administrators and teachers, as well as those responsible for training school adjustment counselors. This handbook would hopefully be a resource book to help guide school adjustment counselors through the many, and constantly increasing, aspects of the job. The handbook will focus on the uniqueness of the school adjustment counseling function. Much is being said about the presence of a significant adult in the school environment as the key ingredient in helping students to succeed in spite of major trauma and/or deprivation. The school adjustment counselor has a major role to play, whether the counselor is that significant adult or the counselor's presence helps to empower another staff member to fill this role.

Nowhere in the literature has this writer found a handbook or workbook which provides a framework and some "how-to's" for school adjustment counselors attempting to deal with the many facets of the job. My hope is that the handbook will be practical, philosophically sound, and detailed enough to be useful to those who read it. It is not intended, however, to be so specific as to be a cookbook for school adjustment counseling. It will, hopefully, establish a framework of possibilities for the counselor's role. Program possibilities are limited only by the counselor's creativity, energy, and an awareness of the needs and resources of the school. Repeatedly, through

the years this writer has found that the most successful programs emanate from the needs and resources of the particular school, with the counselor as catalyst and/or facilitator.

Method of Study

I plan to generate this handbook based on what I have learned during the past twenty-two years as a school adjustment counselor, plus what I have learned from the literature, coursework, conferences, interviews, and other school adjustment counselors.

Some of the thoughts come from professional literature such as information gleaned from a review of literature which researched prevention programs in schools.

Some come from fellow school adjustment counselors in my own community at our bi-weekly case review and staff meetings. Some topics come from school adjustment counselors in other communities, such as the group of counselors from throughout Berkshire County who met with me for a thirty hour seminar as a requirement of their Massachusetts certification as school adjustment counselors, and the group of Berkshire County school adjustment counselors who meet monthly to share information and concerns.

Some ideas were garnered from a five day visit which I made to Ottawa, Canada in June of 1985. Through the review of literature which I was conducting at that time, I

discovered the existence of the Preventive Mental Health
Project which had been in existence since 1973 in the
Ottawa, Ontario schools. The essential ingredient of this
project had been the placement of a mental health worker in
each of the pilot schools to function as resource person,
change agent, counselor. The workers were involved in all
parts of the school day, including playground recess. They
served as a resource to teachers, counseled students, went
into classrooms, etc. The results of the ten year
longitudinal study of the project had been published by the
Canadian government. I wrote requesting permission to do
an on-site visit to the Ottawa schools to view the program.
I conducted a series of interviews with students, parents,
teachers, administrators, community personnel and mental
health workers to develop an in-depth sense of their
response to prevention as a primary approach to mental
health services in a school system.

Some thoughts have come from conferences, courses, and
workshops in which I have participated. Of particular
significance has been the training in family systems
thinking which I received in coursework at the University
of Massachusetts from Dr. Evan Imber-Black, and the
understanding of Carl Rogers which I received from Dr. Jack
Wideman.

The family systems thinking which I speak of, emanates
from general systems theory. In systems theory everything
that exists does so as part of a continuously interacting

system that seeks to maintain a balance between homeostasis and morphogenesis by conforming to patterns of interaction that define the system and hold it together. Similarly, in the school setting, the child, the teacher, the parent, the school adjustment counselor, and the principal each exist as part of a continuously interacting system that seeks to maintain a balance between the many and often conflicting, components and expectations within the school community. Any action by one part of the system can best be understood in terms of its place and function within the system. No matter how original, creative, or unpredictable the action may seem at first, it is always a part of the interactional patterns of the system, influenced, limited, and evoked by the system. Any change in one part of the system will evoke changes in other parts of the system in order to maintain its coherence. Systems, just as individuals do, seek to both maintain their basic nature, function or identity and to evolve into more differentiated, complex, and versatile components of the larger system in which they belong.

Some thoughts have developed out of feedback from the more than one hundred workshops and seminars I have presented to fellow professionals and parents.

Some, and perhaps most, of the thoughts have evolved from the twenty-two years of working in the schools in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. From being part of the

institution in what I hope has been a meaningful way, programs, ideas, thoughts have evolved.

Carl Rogers comes closer than anyone else I've read in describing this phenomenon. Rogers had great faith in the resources of persons to come to know themselves best and to know what is best for themselves whenever they are in a relationship, or in a system, that is characterized by authentic respect, caring, and empathetic understanding. He found this to be true whether one is considering the resources of individuals, groups, or organizations, but the larger the group or organization, the more complicated, precarious, and slow the process may be. Rogers acknowledged that to maintain one's faith in the resources of larger systems, to come to know their true nature, and to choose what is best for themselves, requires a long range vision and/or experience and perhaps the courage to take some well-calculated leaps of faith in the process of institutional learning and development. In his last book, A Way of Being, he says, ..."when we provide a psychological climate that permits persons to be, whether they are clients, students, workers or persons in a group--we are not involved in a chance event. We are tapping into a tendency which permeates all of organic life--a tendency to become all the complexity of which the organism is capable. And on an even larger scale, I believe we are tuning in to a potent creative tendency which has formed our universe.... "(Rogers, 1980, p.134.)

I shall write a first draft of a handbook based on ideas I have learned from the literature, from courses and seminars, from other school adjustment counselors, but primarily based on my own experiences during twenty-two years as a school adjustment counselor.

After completing the first draft of the handbook, it will be submitted to a select number of school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, counselors in training, and other school personnel from various school systems for their evaluation. They will be asked to consider its clarity, relevance, inclusivity, usefulness, and new ideas, and they will be encouraged to offer suggestions for improvement.

The original draft of the handbook will be the one which appears in Chapter IV, but the evaluations and suggestions will appear in Chapter V and, hopefully, some of the feedback will be reflected in Chapter VI. (For further discussion, see Chapter III on Methodology.)

Significance of the Study

The primary significance of this study is to help school adjustment counselors in the performance of their jobs and to help those who train school adjustment counselors to more fully prepare their students for the many aspects of the job. It would be impossible in any text to cover all of the possibilities that one may encounter as a school adjustment counselor, but the

handbook will provide a framework for the school adjustment counselor and a perspective which appreciates the uniqueness of the school setting. It should, therefore, be particularly helpful in the school setting. There does not exist in this writer's knowledge any manual to help new school adjustment counselors or the trainers of school adjustment counselors with the many components and possibilities of the position.

This writer has mentioned only the term school adjustment counselor throughout this proposal because that is the title of the position in Massachusetts schools and that is the term with which she is most familiar. It is hoped that this handbook will be helpful to schools who use other titles for their counseling staff. In many states the job description which most closely approximates the school adjustment counselor is school social worker. In some school systems the school psychologist performs these same functions. In others there may be no certified mental health professional staff, but some of their functions are handled by a guidance counselor, a school nurse, a vice principal, a special education teacher, or any other interested staff member.

The philosophical framework which views the school as a system and acknowledges the interconnectedness of all of the parts of that system, as well as an overview of some of the many possibilities of the school adjustment counselor position will hopefully be beneficial information for all

of the above mentioned school staff, as well as others interested in and concerned about our schools.

This handbook will hopefully provide an understanding of the uniqueness of the school adjustment counseling function. If it is successful, it will help to establish more understanding and acceptance of the school adjustment counselor role. School administrators and school committees in schools which do not have this position will be able to understand the functions of the job and will, hopefully, realize how helpful the position would be in their schools.

Hopefully, school adjustment counselor training in schools of social work and other master's degree programs would reflect more adequately the realities of the job. There has often been an attempt to make the training of school adjustment counselors fit into traditional social work to increase the credibility and acceptance of the position. Trainers of school adjustment counselors need to appreciate the significance of this position in contemporary schools and more adequately prepare counselors for the realities of the job.

Hopefully, this handbook will lead to further study of the school adjustment counselor function and further elucidations by other writers of the school adjustment counselor's role in the school. The flexibility of the position has always been one of its major strengths. Because the job description has not usually been spelled

out, the job could develop as the needs arose, limited
primarily by the counselor's own vision of his/her role.
This handbook will, hopefully, not limit the position by
making the job description more specific. It will,
conversely, expand possibilities by giving new and veteran
school adjustment counselors new ways of thinking about
their roles in the school. It will give them permission to
try new ways of doing things. Hopefully, they will become
more open to viewing their school environment and
encouraging programs to evolve from the needs of their
particular school.

Hopefully, administrators of schools and school
committees, both in schools which already have school
adjustment counselors and in schools which don't--will gain
new insights as to how this position operates and how it
can benefit the school and the community.

As stated in a New York Times article on February 12,
1990, "As the school system veers toward the twenty-first
century, there is a growing realization that for thousands
of students the schools are more than places to receive an
education.....given the rampant dysfunction in some young
lives--crack-addicted mothers, sexually abusive fathers,
neighborhoods in which gunfire is practically a ritual--the
schools, for all their flaws, are an oasis." Priscilla
Chavez-Reilly, Director of the Office of Student Guidance
and Development for the New York City Board of Educators,
discusses in the article the shift in the role of the

counselor to a "facilitator of human development" instead
of someone who helps with a crisis or is called on to
assist in choosing a college.

This approach to school adjustment counseling as a
facilitator of human development—a systemic perspective—is
the topic which I do not believe exists in the literature
in any useful, somewhat comprehensive way. I hope that
this manual will address this approach in a cogent manner
and will impact the apologetic, piecemeal way that the job
often evolves. Students and new practitioners will
understand how to "do" school adjustment counseling. New
school adjustment counselors will have some guidelines to
help them, although hopefully they will allow programs to
evolve from the needs of their particular school. They will
have a clearer perspective on which to base their program
development. With this approach clearly established, they
would have more ease in presenting their ideas to
administrators and school committees regarding new programs
and even systems change on behalf of students.

Limitations of the Study

There will be no attempt in this dissertation project
to prove empirically that this text will produce any
measurable results. The sample of evaluators is too small
to be able to draw any statistically significant
conclusions. There will, however, be an attempt to seek
the critiques of as broad a range of people involved with

21

school adjustment counseling as is possible: experienced school adjustment counselors, new school adjustment counselors, guidance counselors, students from various backgrounds who are training as school adjustment counselors, counselors with varying academic credentials, counselors from different geographical areas, administrators with varying philosophical perspectives.

The writer intends to include only those activities which she knows from actually doing them or experiencing them. There are many excellent activities and possible functions of school adjustment counselors which will not be included in the handbook because the writer has not personally been involved with them, and her information would not be first-hand. One of her main goals in developing this handbook is to communicate what she knows is doable from her own experience.

While there is a hope that this handbook will be coherent, clear, and useful, the key word is useful. It is not intended to be a comprehensive resource book which lists every philosophy of counseling, every kind of counseling group, or all of the possible prepared parent education programs which are available. In fact, it does none of those things.

It also assumes that the school adjustment counselor reading this knows much about the prevalent issues such as adolescent suicide, substance abuse, child abuse, family dynamics, and techniques of self-esteem building or knows

where to get the information necessary to become adequately informed. It is hoped, rather, that this book will be a helpful tool to the school adjustment counselor (or other staff who use it) in establishing a philosophical point of view from which to operate in the school setting.

C H A P T E R   I I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of literature did not produce any text or handbook which seemed to cover the scope of the school adjustment counselor's job. The writer used several possible titles for the position when doing the investigation since the term school adjustment counselor is very specific to Massachusetts and not used universally to label the position. Titles such as school counselor, school social worker, guidance personnel, school mental health worker and community psychologist were investigated, hoping to cover the spectrum of possibilities of school staff who might function in this manner. This non-existence of a volume of literature appears to validate the need for a handbook.

The writer did, however, find a considerable body of literature which supports the preventive or systemic approach to these services, rather than a solely traditional clinical focus. This writer has chosen to use the term systemic, although one could say preventive since a prevention approach mandates involvement in a systemic way. The counselor who focuses on prevention must interact with the various systems impacting a child's life-the teacher, the classroom, the parents, the general community. To further elucidate, when prevention is addressed, it is primary prevention which is the intention of the writer.

All school adjustment counseling is intended to be
preventive. When the position was first mandated by the
Massachusetts Department of Youth Services in 1952, the
intention was to prevent juvenile delinquency in those
students considered at risk for such a label, although the
word "prevention" in this context would refer to secondary
prevention, not primary prevention. Caplan and Grunebaum
proposed that prevention consisted of three
stages--primary, secondary, and tertiary (Caplan and
Grunebaum, 1967, p. 331), and this definition has been
used by many writers in the social work and counseling
field to describe and define activities. Primarily these
types of prevention are defined as:

1. primary: aimed at reducing the incidence of new
   cases in a population by concentrating on
   modifying stressful environments and educating
   individuals to cope with the stresses which are
   bound to impinge upon their lives.

2. secondary: aimed at reducing a disorder or
   dysfunction by early identification and active
   intervention programs.

3. tertiary: aimed at reducing the after effects of
   disorders or dysfunctions by rehabilitation,
   often hospitalization. (Gilman, 1981.)

To illustrate further the differentiation between primary
and secondary prevention, a high school counselor working
with a group of students who need to reduce their intake of
calories is responding to a problem already existing, and
therefore operates at the secondary level of prevention.
On the other hand, the school counselor who initiates a
guidance program on nutrition as an integral part of the

school curriculum operates at the primary level of prevention. This is not a response to a problem, in this case a damaging life style, but rather a psychology-based educational intervention that promotes a healthy life style. (Klingman, 1984, p. 576.)

According to Rosemary Sarri, when school social work was first recognized as a social work sub-specialty in 1906, the practice clearly had a developmental perspective. (Sarri, 1972.) Its major focus was social change—a school, community, family liaison function. Visiting teachers, as they were called, performed a liaison function, explaining the demands of the school to parents and gathering an understanding of the family and neighborhood influences upon the child. That focus remained until the 1950's when school social work de-emphasized its focus on social change in the school and environment. The emphasis became much more clinical, was focused on the personality development of the individual child; had a much more disease or dysfunction orientation. Although Sarri sees casework as one of the legitimate roles of school social work, she makes a case for an expanded orientation. She says that in the school setting, inter and intra-organizational work for change are essential. She also encourages school social workers to be involved in program development. She encourages vision and creativity, as well as assertiveness in including oneself as a valuable resource in the area of program development. In fact, she believes that school

social workers who often have more expertise in individual and group dynamics should be designing community and parent involvement activities.

Reviewing the history clearly shows a pendulum swing back and forth as to the primary focus of school social work (i.e., school adjustment counseling). As Sarri points out, the preventive, systemic view was very much a part of the mandate of school social work early in the twentieth century. Traditional social casework skills were readily transferred to the school setting and contributed greatly to improving the educational experience for students receiving these services. As these roles became increasingly acceptable to the school systems that employed social workers, pressures for individual services increased. School social workers began to decrease their involvement in developing school policy or changing systems, partly as a response to increasing demand for their clinical services and partly as a response to the prevailing mode of the educational establishment's resistance to pupil personnel functions. There was a real threat of job loss when the system interpreted change efforts as criticism or attack (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 5). This was exacerbated by the educational establishment's decreasing budgets and competing demands by various groups wanting services.

The community psychologists who worked so diligently to try to establish that field in the 1960's developed a

point of view which closely corroborates this writer's view about the role of the school adjustment counselor in the 1990's. Seymour Sarason, writing in the late 1970's, sounded somewhat frustrated at the direction community psychology was taking (similar to this writer's frustration about the solely dysfunction orientation of school adjustment counseling in many school systems). Although his work was not geared expressly for education, his words make sense to this writer. Community psychology, Sarason said, was not intended to be restricted to psycho pathology, but rather it was a field that tried to see the community in its complexity. In his definition of how he perceives the community psychologist, he says

> I refer to any instance in which (an academic person) takes on a socially responsible role--in government, politics, business, schools, poverty agencies--which will allow him to experience the natural functioning of that particular aspect of society. The role must be an operational one with responsibility and some decision-making powers. He becomes an insider--he is at bat--he is not sitting in the stand passively observing the game and passing judgment on the players. He is in the game and he is a player. Finally, he assumes the new role not only to learn but to change and move things. (Sarason, 1977, p. 10)

Some thoughts of Jack Chensky, one of the presenters at a University of Massachusetts conference organized by Stuart Golann in 1973 to review the state of the community psychology field, impress this writer as capturing some of the essence of her vision of school adjustment counseling. Chensky says that community psychology had a great appeal to him because "...it is active, rather than passive;

systems oriented rather than individual oriented, behavioral rather than verbal, and preventative rather than rehabilitative. Perhaps most important--optimistic and hopeful..." (Golann, 1975, p. 43.)

It is of interest that the book, The School In the Community, which Rosemary Sarri and Frank Maple edited, is an outgrowth of a conference entitled "Social Change and School Social Work in the 1970's" held at the University of Pennsylvania in June, 1969. A stated goal of this workshop, sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers and the National Institute of Mental Health, was to stimulate innovation and change in school social work throughout the United States. Another primary objective, responding to the period of social upheaval and crisis which was occurring at that time, was to encourage school social workers to assume significant leadership roles in facilitating effective social change in their communities (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 7).

Many of the presenters at that 1969 conference whose papers are included in this 1972 volume (Sarri & Maple, 1972) spoke to issues which corroborate the point of view of this writer. Lela B. Costin, a professor at the Jan Addams Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Illinois, discussed the results of an extensive national survey of the activities and roles of school social workers. Costin reports that social workers define their activities in terms of individual remedial services and

give little attention to modifying school conditions that contribute to the emergence or maintenance of problem behavior among students. She proposes several general strategies for augmenting system change and emphasizes the importance of recognizing that the school is primarily an educational institution, rather than a context for providing therapeutic services to selected children (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 8). This writer has repeatedly stated that the host agency of school adjustment counseling, the school, mandates a systemic-developmental-preventive approach. Students do not come to school to be fixed, but to learn, to develop, to grow. In reviewing the survey of school social workers' tasks, Costin was critical of strong emphasis being placed on helping the individual student accommodate himself to the existing school situation rather than on any concern for modifying patterns within a school's operations that might be generating difficulties for him and for other students as well (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 32).

Costin made a number of recommendations to remedy what she considered an unfortunate situation. She encouraged school social workers to consult actively with administrators and teachers in formulating school policy concerning children's issues; she encouraged renewed attention to serving as a liaison among home, school and community. She was concerned that relationships with community agencies and most schools were ineffective, at

best, if not seriously detrimental. She encouraged school social workers to assume leadership in the school and community to advocate for needed programs both inside the school and in the general community which would enhance services for youth (Sarri & Maple, 1972, pp. 34-36).

Jerry Willis and Joan Willis, a psychologist and social worker from Alabama, identified specific strategies for changing school systems from within through generating administrative support, in their paper presented at the Pennsylvania Social Work Conference. They view the school social worker as the person in a significant position to function as the change agent in the school (Sarri & Maple, 1972, pp. 211-232).

Two writers and presenters, Claire Gallert and Barbara MacDonald, consultants to the Department of Education from Hartford, Connecticut, spoke to the significance of the school social worker's intervention in the larger community, in their view, the state (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 275).

Linda Wassenick, a social worker from Dallas, Texas presented a paper at the same conference which strongly supports the systemic view of intervention in schools. She stated that systems theory provides a basic structure for understanding complex organization and can be most helpful to the social worker in developing a comprehensive view of the system in which he works. An effective case is made

for intervening in the total system to create institutional innovations (Sarri & Maple, 1972, p. 210).

Although there seemed to be very little interest in the preventive or systemic approach to school social work or school counseling after the University of Pennsylvania Conference in 1969 and the publication of Sarri and Maple's book in 1972 highlighting that conference, since the mid 1980's there have been several initiatives, both papers and conferences, focusing on this approach to school counseling services.

The American Personnel and Guidance Journal, in April 1984, devoted an entire issue to the topic of Primary Prevention In The Schools. The guest editors of that issue were extremely concerned about the diminishing number of guidance specialists in the school (Shaw & Goodyear, April 1984, p. 446). (They use the term guidance specialist to cover school counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.) They felt that guidance specialists had been hit harder than other education professionals in times when funding for schools had become increasingly problematic and when media and community support for education had been in a severe downturn. Some of their reasons for proposing primary prevention activities were as a response to this downturn. Their rationale seems too reactive to this writer, and not a sufficiently meaningful reason to undertake primary prevention activities. For example, they are concerned about the invisibility (Shaw &

Goodyear, April 1984, p. 446) of guidance specialists which makes them more easily expendable. They propose that primary prevention activities would heighten visibility. That is certainly true, but it is the belief of the writer that visibility alone would not be sufficient reason to focus a school system's counseling services in this direction if the students would not benefit from this approach.

A further reason the editors encourage primary prevention is to respond to critics who say counselors are not cost-effective because they do not see enough students. This rationale for primary prevention, while popular, would also be an insufficient reason for embracing this approach, in this writer's view.

When Shaw and Goodyear address the matter of the effectiveness of current services, their rationale seems much more relevant:

> Given the large number of students and the small number of guidance specialists, along with the pressures that are caused by dealing with many problem children, we are often forced to spend less time than we would like with problems that in reality demand more time. Related to the issue of effectiveness is the fact that teachers have become used to referring their problems to us and then, figuratively at least, washing their hands of the situation in the belief that we would "cure" the child and return him or her whole to the classroom. In such circumstances, our effectiveness is inevitably diminished. (Shaw and Goodyear, April 1984, p. 446)

While recognizing that there is no immediate or single solution to this complex situation, the editors suggest that primary prevention approaches hold promise. They

state that the evidence for the effectiveness of primary preventive approaches is as good and perhaps better than the evidence of the results with problem cases and encourages guidance specialists to teach communication skills to groups of teachers, behavior management skills to groups of parents, and inter-personal problem-solving skills to class-sized groups of children. Speaking much more to educational efficacy than they did earlier in their article, the editors address the issue of primary prevention's contribution to the development and education of children. They suggest that primary prevention techniques may assist children to learn more effectively, to attend school more often, and to relate more effectively to other people. They are clear in saying, however, that they are not making a claim that primary prevention should take over the functions of guidance specialists, rather, that a balanced approach to service delivery demands the inclusion of primary preventive services (Shaw & Goodyear, April 1984, p. 447).

In fact, one of the articles in the issue of the American Personnel and Guidance Journal which was devoted entirely to primary prevention, takes an even stronger view than this writer espouses. Norman A. Sprinthall writes with considerable impatience about the slow pace of primary prevention in the schools. He blames much of this slow pace on counselor education programs which, in their efforts to provide masters and doctoral level students with

therapy skills, have completely overlooked the task of training counselors to work with teachers in the classroom, parents in the community, and administrators concerning the general climate of the school (Sprinthall, 1984, p. 491). He particularly mentions May Green as, in his view, the most consistent theorist-practitioner in the field as a spokesperson for primary prevention activities in the classroom. Green suggests quite strongly that counselor education programs should reflect what theory and research clearly show. That is, that traditional individual counseling and small group therapy-oriented treatment is basically a low pay-off intervention system (Sprinthall, 1984, p. 493). Green takes the position that at least two-thirds of counselor education content should be focused on primary prevention (Green, 1979). In the opinion of this writer, that point of view is too extreme. From observation and feedback from teachers and parents, this writer has seen some excellent results in helping children by working with the various systems in their lives—the classroom and the family, particularly. However, there are students who benefit greatly from the relationship with the counselor, not necessarily to deal with intra-psychic dysfunction, but perhaps to help the student understand the complexities of his life or, perhaps, just to have one adult who listens, whom he can count on. That is not to say that it is not important to encourage the teachers and the parents to hone their listening skills, but some

students dramatically benefit from the one-to-one counseling relationship. In fact, Dr. Pamela Cantor, who is quoted in other sections of this paper, when she presented at the annual Harvard Medical School Conference on Suicide in 1993, made a powerful case for the presence in students' lives of that one meaningful adult who can help students overcome poverty, abuse and other extreme forms of dysfunction. This writer believes all the pieces, individual and group counseling, family education, community advocacy, as well as primary prevention activities are necessary to a totally effective school adjustment counseling program.

Richard S. Podemski and John H. Childers, Jr. make a strong case for a central role for school counselors and social workers in the restructuring of schools, a movement which is currently happening throughout the country (Podemski & Childers, 1987, pp. 17-22). After first discussing their concerns that counselors have been most overlooked and underutilized in the educational restructuring process, they deal extensively with the unique aspects of the organizational dimension of the counselor's role which they believe provide the counselor with an excellent opportunity for significant involvement. They make a strong case for the counselor to view the school from a systems perspective, saying the counselor may be in the best position to do this, given that the counselor interacts with all school reference groups (the

principal is probably the only other school personnel in this situation); the counselor has staff authority (the case is made that recommendations of the counselor tend to be viewed by school personnel as serving the good of the organization rather than as being self-serving); the counselor has confidentiality of information and is therefore in an excellent position to sense organizational problems and bring them to the attention of those who can develop solutions; the counselor has a flexible schedule; and that counselors, by training and generally by attitude, perceive themselves as change agents (Podemski & Childers, Jr., 1987, p. 19). They are quite optimistic about five trends that they see in counselor training and practice which they believe can revitalize their role and help counselors to become much more central to the functioning of the school. They are all trends which support this writer's systemic approach to school adjustment counseling. They are as follows:

1. Moving from a philosophy of remediation to prevention.

2. Moving from direct service delivery to consultation and training.

3. Moving from individual work with clients to group work.

4. Moving from the focus of counselor interventions, being the individual or group, to the organization or school.

5. Moving from a school-based philosophy to a school- community philosophy. (Podemski & Childers, Jr., 1987, p. 19)

An article written in 1992 by Bradley D. McDowell and Thomas V. Sayger totally corroborates this writer's approach and provides a model, the Preventive Systemic School Counseling Model (PSSCM), which is completely compatible with the handbook for school adjustment counselors which this writer is developing (McDowell & Sayger, Fall 1992, pp. 25-30).

They state that the apparent shift from the "traditional" family structure toward less familiar family systems continues to challenge our society and its educational system. They postulate that a preventive systems approach can address more effectively the counseling needs of students. They make a strong case, as did Podemski and Childers (Podemski & Childers, Spring 1987, pp. 17-22) for the role of the counselor as a change agent in this process. They expect the trend toward single-parent families and dual-career family systems to continue. Consequently, they believe the potential exists that more children will be raised in less supportive family environments in which they will be expected to mature earlier, demonstrate responsibility at earlier ages, and be more adaptable and individualistic (Wilson & Rotter, 1992). The children of the '90s and beyond will, of course, experience the stress which accompanies such responsibilities. The dilemma for them, as well as for society and its educational establishment, lies in the fact that the support provided to children by the family

continues to decrease while simultaneously, demands on the children continue to increase at earlier and earlier ages. This is a dilemma experienced by this writer frequently during her twenty-two years as a school adjustment counselor. McDowell and Sayger state repeatedly that addressing the concerns of the student via a systems model under the guise of prevention within the educational system can be an effective approach to addressing the changing needs of children. They quote Zims and Ponti (1985, pp. 49-50), "Schools have the potential of playing an enormous role in fostering mental health."

A detailed paper, "Creating a Preventive School" (Dickel, et al., June, 1992, 32 pp.), was presented at the Annual Conference of the American School Counselor Association in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The paper presents a ten-step procedure for the planning of primary prevention interventions in a school setting. Of particular interest to this writer was the group planning with the involvement of all school-related persons during each phase of the ten-step procedure. While acknowledging that this process is time-consuming, the authors believe group involvement in the planning process is crucial to the concept of primary prevention as they view it: to promote the self-esteem, coping skills and growth of all the segments of the school population (Dickel, 1992, p. 14). They believe, too, that programs will be much more successful if they evolve from the group process. That is a theme which is sounded

throughout this writer's handbook. Her experience clearly corroborates these authors' point of view.

Somewhat parallel with the renewed interest in a preventive or systemic approach which was slowly resurfacing in the United States in the early 1980's, the Canadian educational establishment had become extremely interested in the notion of primary prevention strategies in the pursuit of mental health for its students. There had been growing community concern throughout Canada for children under stress. Their concern was that "children with problems become problem children" (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. XIX). Typically, in Canada as in the United States, support to children who needed additional community support had come in the form of crisis intervention after their problems had become acute. Interest had been growing in primary prevention and health promotion, two directions of which would be the creating of environments nurturant of mental health and reinforcing these qualities in children that enable them to resist the damaging effects of stress and disadvantage (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. XIX). The notion was accepted, on the part of many people involved, that the environment plays a major role in enabling the individual to achieve and maintain mental health (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1974), and that the school is the most important institution that affects children's mental health, apart from the family (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. 1).

Based on this interest, the Ottawa, Ontario Board of Education and the Department of National Health and Welfare of Canada commissioned the Canadian Mental Health Association to pursue the topic. The Elementary School Mental Health Project evolved as a school-based program of mental health promotion and primary prevention. It involved an extensive three-year research project to study the effects of primary prevention activities in schools. In 1973 one school had, on its own, hired a school mental health worker (a name chosen by the school to differentiate this person who would work with children individually and in groups, but also in their classrooms, cafeteria and playground, with their parents, and in the school and general community, from the school social workers who worked with students identified as having problems). A second school was chosen to begin the program in 1980. Two control schools were also established. Great efforts were made to match the control schools to the two schools studied in the research design as closely as possible, a particularly difficult task when dealing with an entity as fluid as a school. Questionnaires as well as interviews were extensively used in the study. The evaluation was completed in 1983, and a 300 page evaluation report was prepared. The mental health workers remarked repeatedly on changes of perceptions of their role in the school. Initially in both of the schools studied, the worker was perceived as someone who would solve problems and bring

"magic wand" solutions (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. 145).
Through orientation and education in each school, the
worker came to be regarded as a resource and support to
those working with children in the schools and as part of a
team approach characterized by a positive attitude of
working together and joint problem-solving. The mental
health worker's role began to be perceived as more
innovative and community-action oriented than the school
social worker's role had typically been.

The main objective of the research study was to
examine the relationship between the program and various
indicators associated with children's mental health.
Observations made by principals, teachers, and specialists
noted that in both schools there was evidence of a less
confrontational atmosphere than in the control schools.
Staff remarked on changes in children's behavior with less
hostile and aggressive behavior in evidence. Referrals to
the Psychology and Social Services departments from the
project schools decreased over the evaluation period and
were consistently lower than the control schools and the
general average for schools of similar size (Webster &
Hyland, 1983, p. 290). There was no evidence, however, to
support effectiveness of the program for such variables as
attendance, achievement measures, or referrals to special
education. The children's level of classroom adjustment
was assessed by means of a Classroom Adjustment Rating
Scale, an instrument for rating by teachers, pre and post

test. Results showed evidence of a decline in children's symptoms of classroom maladjustment.

An additional objective of the evaluation was to examine the relationship between the program and various conditions nurturant of children's mental health in the school and community. There was supportive evidence for positive effects of the program on several conditions nurturant of mental health: communication patterns both within school and between school and community, awareness of children's mental health and attitudes toward children, use of home resources, and user satisfaction with the program (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. 291). It was particularly interesting that as exposure to the preventive mental health program grew, teachers whose classroom had been actively involved definitely decreased their formal contact with the mental health worker. A majority of teachers in both schools reported in responses to the questionnaire changes in their own attitudes and practices as a result of their contact with the mental health worker (Webster & Hyland, 1983, p. 293). The conclusion of the 300-page evaluation report recommends that based upon the following evaluation results, the program be continued in its present settings and expanded gradually to other schools. The evaluation established that:

- a relationship existed between the mental health worker's program and the positive changes in children's mental health, as evidenced in some of the indicators studied.

- a relationship existed between the mental health worker's program and the positive changes in conditions nurturant of children's mental health in schools and communities as evidenced in most of the variables examined.

- the program model adequately defined the intervention carried out by the mental health worker.

- The intervention program was replicable in another school setting.

- the success of the intervention program was not due to any unique characteristics of the current project settings. (Webster & Hyland, 1983)

This writer became aware of the Elementary School Mental Health Project through a literature review which she conducted in 1984, and was extremely interested in its prevention/systemic focus. She made a five-day site visit to Ottawa, Canada in June 1985, conducting ten interviews with people who were involved, including the mental health worker at the two schools in the project, the principal investigator who had been the inspiration for the project, the principals of the two schools, the other social workers at the schools, the Chief Psychologist of the Ottawa schools, the Chief of Special Education and the Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association. In addition, she made on-site visits to the two schools, talked to teachers and other staff, talked to students, and made classroom and playground observations. The comments of everyone interviewed were positive, some totally enthusiastic, about every aspect of the program and its definite replicability to other schools. Some were more cautious about the realities of funding the "right" staff

44

to make the program work, but still positive about the program. All those people interviewed felt they had observed many fine things, and that the evaluation study had more than corroborated their feelings that the prevention program was working. Repeatedly, the writer heard about the importance of the person who was the mental health worker in affecting the atmosphere of the school. She heard the clear statement from many interviewees that the philosophy and style of the person who was the mental health worker was central in making the program successful. The people interviewed said the worker would need to be a person who connected easily with staff and parents, as well as with students, who reached out to the general community to advocate for the schools. He/she would need to be a person who did not view every problem that children bring to school as a sign that the child is mentally ill, and he/she would need to be a person who is a good listener. This writer views all of these as characteristics of an effective school adjustment counselor and saw the success of this prevention project for the delivery of mental health services in the school setting as excellent support for her approach to school adjustment counseling.

C H A P T E R   I I I

METHODOLOGY

Over the course of ten years, two reviews of
literature (one done in 1984 and one in 1994), as well as
interviews with many professionals in the field of school
adjustment counseling (those interviewees not in
Massachusetts had various other titles for the position),
and with students preparing to enter the field of school
adjustment counseling, and interviews with people involved
with the training and/or certification of school adjustment
counselors, this writer has not discovered a resource book
which elucidates the function of a school adjustment
counselor in the school setting.

This writer has attempted to create such a handbook
based on her experiences in twenty-two years as a school
adjustment counselor, a review of relevant literature, an
on-site visit to Ottowa, Canada, participation in hundreds
of workshops, having presented about 125 workshops herself,
information gleaned from the twelve practicing school
adjustment counselors whom she has prepared for state
certification, and from the many colleagues she has talked
to about this unique position.

The handbook is written in the first person,
deliberately using conversational language. That is not to
say that the school counseling personnel who will be the
primary users of the handbook would be unable to comprehend

professional language, but the writer wants the book to be very usable, very accessible for busy, overworked practitioners in the field. Too, there are school systems which do not yet have school adjustment counselors or school social workers. This writer wants this book to be useful to that population, too.

There are many ways a handbook for school adjustment counseling services (called by many titles, including school social worker, guidance specialist, school counselors, etc.) could be focused. One of the complexities of this writer's view of school adjustment counseling, perhaps both a strength and a weakness, is that there are not clear parameters as to the job description. This writer believes the lack of a uniform job description is a strength because the counselor has great latitude, great flexibility, in deciding how the job should be done. To use the language of the systemic family therapists, that is, the counselor may decide where and how to intervene in the system (of the school) to be most helpful to the client (the student population). Of course, there are schools where the school adjustment counselor is given a list of students and told to "fix" them, but that is precisely the approach which this handbook attempts to refocus. The weakness inherent in the lack of clear boundaries for school adjustment counselors is that the job can become overwhelming, undoable, for the counselor.

The focus of this handbook, which uses a systemic or preventive perspective, includes only those activities of a school adjustment counselor which the writer has done. Using the systemic or primary prevention perspective, there are many activities which could be included. To use the metaphor of a cookbook, this writer chose to use only those recipes which were tested. Many possible activities are not included because they would have been the writer's reporting of other counselors' experiences, what she had read or seen, but not what she knows from her own experience.

The goal was to have the handbook evaluated for a number of specific factors by various categories of people in the field. The primary factor is usability, but in addition, readers were asked to evaluate the handbook for clarity, relevance, inclusiveness, new ideas, new thinking and new actions.

The categories of people in the field who were readers include the following:

New school adjustment counselors—up to two years in the field.

Experienced school adjustment counselors—more than two years in the field.

Counselors in training.

Guidance Counselors.

Counseling Administrators.

Education Professionals in Related Fields.

Potential evaluators were reached by telephone or in person, told about the project, and asked if they would be willing to be readers. They were told that if they agreed to be readers, they would need to complete a matrix and brief questionnaire as to the usefulness of the handbook. In several instances, the writer made general announcements at meetings in search for readers. (For example, there is a county-wide network of school adjustment counselors and school psychologists at which this technique was employed.) One-half of the evaluators are people who are not known to the writer. In some cases, pupil personnel department chairpersons solicited evaluators from their staffs. Concerning the other half of the evaluators, those known to the writer, the writer requested their impartiality, ensuring the evaluators that they could be most helpful to the goal of the project by being totally candid.

A cover letter was sent with the draft of the handbook requesting the evaluator to fill out a matrix and a questionnaire. The results of their responses are discussed in Chapter V.

A matrix was prepared for evaluators to record their responses to each chapter of the handbook. They were asked to rate the chapters for the following criteria:

Clarity: How readable, easy to understand.

Relevance: Plausibility and soundness for school adjustment counseling.

Inclusiveness: Adequate covering of the issues.

New Ideas: Does it add to your repertoire?

Usable: Can you see how you can use it soon? Or have you already?

New Thinking: Does it elicit new thoughts?

New Actions: Does it evoke new activities for you?

A matrix was used to simplify the task for the evaluators and to encourage more specific responses both by chapter and for each of the categories.

The evaluators were asked to rate each of the categories by number, to simplify their task, and to simplify the task of compiling the responses. The numerical scale used was as follows:

1 = Very poor, useless

2 = OK (Unclear, off target, a lot missing)

3 = Good, but needs more.

4 = Very Good

5 = Excellent

6 = Not applicable

The numerical ratings were compiled on a matrix, showing clearly the evaluator input for each chapter and category. Chapter V of the dissertation reports the compilation of the evaluations item by item on the matrix and includes additional comments that the respondents have included.

A brief general questionnaire was included with the matrix. The two questions which are the critical issues in development of this handbook were asked, with a goal of eliciting open-ended responses. They are as follows:

1. "In what ways have you found the handbook to be usable? Please list and describe specific examples."

2. In what ways has the emphasis on a "system" approach changed and/or confirmed your own "systems thinking" and systemic activities or "interventions?"

In addition, five general questions were asked, again to elicit open-ended responses. They are:

1. What do you consider the strengths of the handbook?

2. What are its weaknesses?

3. Is there anything which should be added?

4. Is there anything which should be deleted?

5. Would you recommend it to other professionals?

Chapter V will also report the responses to these seven questions.

The project was done primarily to produce a handbook for school adjustment counselors (also called school social workers, etc.), school adjustment counselors in training, and other school personnel who might be involved with such staff as supervisors or colleagues. It was not meant to be an empirical study designed to prove any specific

hypothesis. The sampling of readers was not necessarily representative of the entire population of possible readers, although the writer attempted to get readers of different experience and different geographical areas. The handbook was not intended to be a scholarly work. Its goal was to provide a framework and be easily accessible and helpful to school adjustment counselors as well as school adjustment counselors in training.

A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT COUNSELING
SERVICES IN SCHOOLS: A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Rationale

I have spent most of my life in schools, either as a
student, teacher, guidance counselor or school adjustment
counselor. I've decided to write a handbook about the
things I've learned about school and mental health
services, hoping that my thoughts and experiences will be
helpful to others. I have been a School Adjustment
Counselor in the Pittsfield Public Schools for twenty-two
years. For five years before that I was a history teacher
and guidance counselor at Mount Greylock Regional High
School in Williamstown, Massachusetts. I'm proud of
Pittsfield, Massachusetts for considering mental health
services in the school a priority, even in these recent
years when education funding has often been decimated. My
job makes sense. It is unique. It is different working as
a mental health professional in a school setting.
Obviously, schools are not mental health centers, nor
should they be. Children come to school to learn, to
develop, to grow. They do not come primarily to be "fixed"
as they do at a mental health center. The schools' task is
primarily to develop, not to remediate. But these children
who come to learn bring with them everything which is part

of them. They do not leave their problems at the front door as if it were baggage that is checked at an airline counter.

I am writing this handbook regarding my ideas about the provision of mental health services in the school setting now because this writing is for me a natural progression of all I have been observing and experiencing in the schools for the past twenty-five years. As we progress through the last decade of the twentieth century, tomes are being written about our students' lack of preparedness for the technologically advanced years ahead. There are major efforts being undertaken to strengthen educational standards and to promote partnerships between business and education so that our students will "fit" into the year 2000. I fear that well-meaning educators and school boards of education will forget the other major factors impacting education in the last twenty-five years and bound to impact it in the foreseeable future; that is, the extraordinary social revolution, technological evolution, and world events which have occurred and which have impacted the nature of our student population and exerted a great strain on the schools and on our students.

In the last twenty-five years the world has undergone enormous changes, including assassinations of world leaders and the President of the United States. The nation has been sorely tested in its policies at home and in many parts of the world. The emergence of new world leaders in

the economic and political realms have weakened the United
States' communal self-esteem. Scandals have permeated our
government and business communities. We have made
incredible gains in space yet been reminded by the
Challenger disaster that we are not infallible in this
area. We have, in just the last few years, witnessed
extraordinary political events; the demise of the Soviet
Union, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, the relegating
of the Cold War to a place in history. We seem to have no
time to digest one monumental change before a next one
occurs.

Changes in the social realm have perhaps been even
more monumental in their impact on our children. The
family as an institution has been undergoing a revolution
so far-reaching and unequaled that we are even now trying
to redefine what the term 'family' means. Instant
communication has become an accepted fact of contemporary
life as has the realization that the average American
child spends more hours watching TV in a week than he/she
does in school. Organized religion has decreased its
influence as a major institution in many people's lives,
while simultaneously a group of religious zealots employ
sometimes violent behavior in their efforts to impact the
political process. The widespread use of drugs and alcohol
has become one of the greatest concerns of the nation.
Domestic violence and child sexual abuse are reported
regularly as major social problems, but as yet we have made

minimal progress in diminishing their occurrence. Our long-established sexual mores have been seriously questioned and tested since the appearance of the Pill, only to be re-examined as we struggle to deal with AIDS, a term practically unknown even ten years ago, and possibly the most alienating phenomena of our times.

Through all of this, educators are expected to impart ever-increasing information to students weighted down by such heavy baggage. These are the same teachers who have been dealing with declining enrollments and the resultant cutbacks in staff, tax-cutting laws which damage funding for education, as well as a public perception of mediocrity in quality of teachers and all of education.

Although this situation, in which on one hand, the schools are expected to become surrogate families for our students while teaching them more information and skills, and on the other hand, do this with less resources, appears insurmountable; I believe the schools have no choice but to accept this task, given the reality that they are the institutions with the students. Children come to school to learn, to interact, in fact, to live. I believe existing staff has to be used in different, perhaps more creative ways. In my years as a school adjustment counselor, I have continuously changed my focus, done my work in different ways, as I saw the needs develop. There have been more and more students referred to me for help in coping with very major problems. At this writing, the numbers rise into the

hundreds in a single year. It's clear that the traditional social work/case management or treatment approach to deal with students' problems is simply impossible, given time and staff limitations. Necessity has forced me to look at new ways of doing my work, but the new ways are not merely expedient. As I have reviewed various essays I've written in my years in education, I realize that I have been consistent, even before the numbers were so overwhelming, in my belief that the school is the only institution which has the possibility to deal in a preventive or developmental way with the issues our students carry with them, and that the school adjustment counselor has an important role in that endeavor.

That is not to say that I am naive enough to believe that the one institution, the school, can solve all of our society's problems. But, because of its unique position as the one place where everyone lives for a considerable piece of his/her life, it is, I believe, the only realistic possibility to develop more mentally healthy adults.

It also makes sense in terms of the mission of education. As I stated earlier, schools were not designed primarily to remediate, or fix. Schools are places which help people to develop. Therefore, this approach which remediates when necessary, but operates from a developmental framework that we are all in this together; students, staff, parents, in fact, the whole community, in

trying to cope with problems and grow in very difficult times makes sense.

For the past thirteen years I have been located full time in one school building, Pittsfield High School. This full-time status has provided me with a better opportunity to test many of my ideas about the school as a preventive mental health facility than previously when I divided my time among schools. It is difficult to impact the entire system of the school when the counselor is not present full time.

When I visited the Ottawa, Canada public school system in 1984 to observe their preventive mental health program (which I had discovered while doing a review of literature on preventive mental health), I was continuously told that they believe it is necessary for a mental health worker (social worker, counselor, etc.) to be full time and have a regular presence in the many facets of the school day in order to have a preventive impact. However, all of Ottawa's experience was in elementary education. Their staff seemed uncertain whether a full time mental health worker was appropriate in the secondary school which is generally much larger, and often less cohesive. I now feel convinced, as a result of my own experience, that the same needs exist in the secondary school. Just as in the elementary school, programs in the secondary school evolve quite naturally out of the prevailing situation and needs of the school. The programs are not imposed from outside,

but come from within. I believe this is a key aspect.
While I shall discuss some programs which may be relevant
for all schools planning to provide comprehensive mental
health services, it is necessary for the counselor to be a
comfortable regular member of that school's staff to
clearly understand the particular school's situation, and
to facilitate programs evolving. No program is effective
if it doesn't seem compatible with the philosophy or needs
of the particular school in which it is located.

I have seen that being part of the school, eating
lunch with the staff, attending the assemblies, being in
the corridors before and after school, commiserating with
other staff about the everyday frustrations in the school
such as parking and heating problems, all make a difference
in affecting the mental health climate of the school. In
family therapy parlance, there is a term for this
connecting with people in a natural way. It is called
"joining." The family therapist needs to join with the
family to establish a climate in which change and/or growth
is possible. So it is with the school. The counselor who
sees herself/himself as a change agent to promote change
and/or growth needs to join with the school staff to
establish this climate for change.

While there are a variety of mental health programs
which should probably be part of every school's operation,
there is nevertheless, a uniqueness to every school. I
have observed that programs are only effective when they

are developed from the experience of that school, utilizing its staff, its community, and its unique environment.

I do not believe there is a parallel to the role of a school adjustment counselor in any of the other disciplines which employ counselor/social workers in non-mental health center settings. Certainly, the hospital social worker and the traditional school social worker have specifically designed roles to intervene as problem solvers for specific clients—a remedial, rather than developmental approach. I am disappointed that in many school systems and counselor training institutions, the focus for school adjustment counselors/school social workers is only remedial. In no way am I saying that the school adjustment counselor should not work with individual students. This activity is certainly a central aspect of the job. The significant difference for me is in the philosophy which underlies this work, that the entire system is the client; that the entire system has to be considered for change and/or development to occur.

I realize there are schools which do not yet have school adjustment counselors. I certainly hope that the time will come when those schools will see this position as a crucial one if they are to be effective learning environments. It would satisfy my most grandiose dream for this handbook if some school systems added school adjustment counselors to their schools based on reading this handbook.

At the time I am writing, I am presently very concerned about a trend which is moving in direct opposition to my beliefs about school adjustment counseling. There is current talk about privatizing of counseling services to ostensibly save money. Privatizing of school mental health services generally means contracting out to mental health agencies to provide counseling services for those students whose emotional needs are interfering with their learning. Sometimes because numbers have become unmanageable and time is not available to see a student individually on a regular basis, I make the decision that it is in the best interest to refer to outside counseling. More and more frequently I'm sad to say, as the caseload has gone from a manageable fifty to an unmanageable two hundred, necessity has forced me to do this. However, I do not believe that referring students to outside mental health agencies is always in the student's best interest. Such referral tends to pathologize the student's concerns and condition, and involves the student in a traditional "fix the patient" medical model, disconnected from the support system and learning model of the school community in which he/she spends most of his/her time.

Even more distressing to me is that this trend of viewing school adjustment counseling services as individual therapy which can be bought outside of school, misses the entire point of view of the school adjustment counselor's

role as systemic. The problem is once again looked at as residing within the student. The school, in this case, does not view itself as part of the problem or part of the solution. Whether privatized or provided by the school system, school adjustment counselors who provide individual counseling services to students experiencing emotional difficulties generally have a much less significant role in the climate of the school. When school adjustment counselors function as regular members of the school staff, integrated throughout the functioning of the school, there is no way an outside person could replace him/her. The job is different. Providing therapy to the student is just one component of the total picture.

As a matter of fact, a recent conversation with a staffer in the Student Development Office of the Massachusetts Department of Education has corroborated some of my thoughts. He told me that in the past couple of years, marked by massive cutbacks in state funding for education, those school systems which did not eliminate or decrease their numbers of school adjustment counselors were those in which the counselors had become an integral part of the school environment. This supports my notion that a school adjustment counselor who views his position as unique to the school setting cannot be replaced by a counselor from an outside agency. I am convinced that a parallel to this position does not exist.

However, as stated previously, I realize that there are schools who do not yet have school adjustment counselors and are currently in such financial crises that adding any positions is unlikely in the near future. I want this handbook to be helpful to those schools, too. There are aspects of my program which can be adapted to schools even if the activities need to be done by staff members who do not have specific training in counseling. The basic ingredient necessary to implementing some of my ideas is the agreement with the notion that schools are places where students live, that a climate of acceptance and support can have a very positive effect on the emotional development of children and adolescents, and that everyone in the school is a part of the climate, affecting it and/or being affected by it.

What do I mean by a climate of acceptance? I mean a climate which values the uniqueness of each individual. I am reminded of the sociological change in the United States from a time when the ideal was to make the country a "melting pot" where each person and group was blended into the sauce so that no one, person or group, could be readily identified, to a current view which appreciates the United States more as a smorgasbord. The end result is beautiful and delicious. Each ingredient is readily identifiable. They each contribute to the excellence of the smorgasbord, but each ingredient maintains its uniqueness. Another metaphor comes to me. A quilt is a beautiful object made

up of many different patterns, colors, textures. Each
piece is appreciated for its part in the total product, but
there is no attempt to change it. Each piece is valued for
its own special texture or color. A climate of acceptance
in a school values the specialness of each student and
staff member. Each one feels listened to, appreciated, as
enriching the total environment. Just as a group takes on
its own personality, different from any of the particular
individuals in the group, but appreciative of the
uniqueness of each individual who make up the group, so
the school is its own unique environment, but each
individual feels welcomed and appreciated as significant to
that environment. The message felt by everyone who is part
of this environment is that we all benefit from each of us
being here.

Limitations: What This Handbook Is And What It Is Not

     This handbook is a collection of my thoughts and beliefs
about school adjustment counseling after twenty-two years as
a School Adjustment Counselor. My thoughts and beliefs have
been formed by my own experience; by the people, students,
teachers, other people in the field, and by parents who have
influenced me; and by two philosophies which I studied in my
academic training, the philosophy of Carl Rogers and Systemic
Thinking which evolved from my courses in Family Therapy at
the University of Massachusetts. I will say much more about
each of these in the next chapter.

This handbook is not intended as a comprehensive research document on everything there is to know about school social work/school adjustment counseling. I hope not to use buzz words (for example, the term "at-risk students" is currently so over-used that the realities of these children are somehow lost). I will only occasionally quote from journals, etc., although as the years have gone by I've noticed that many articles have corroborated my thoughts. I feel both confident and insecure about doing this, but I am energized by many interns who come back to see me and increase my confidence immeasurably by telling me the internship was of extreme significance in their education, that they really learned how to be part of a school, how to deal with students, staff, parents, how to be helpful, and how to be a school adjustment counselor.

I shall talk only about those aspects of the job that I know from experience. There are many approaches being used in schools today that seem effective in helping our students to cope with their lives which I shall not include because I don't know enough about them to be helpful. My discussion would be an academic one, what I've read and what I've heard in seminars I've attended, but not what I <u>know.</u>

I have only included areas for involvement which I have personally experienced and programs which I have done. There are an extraordinary number of possibilities for specific programming in any school. If the number of materials which come to my attention in a given week is an accurate

indicator, specific parent education programs, self-esteem building programs, teacher in-service seminars are available for purchase by the hundreds or even thousands. Areas for involvement by the counselor are limited only by the individual school adjustment counselor's creativity and energy and, of course, by the school's willingness philosophically and fiscally. The essential factor, as I will state repeatedly throughout this handbook, is that programs evolve from the needs of the particular school. If the counselor is an integral part of the school environment, and if the climate which I have already discussed is present, programs and areas for involvement by the school adjustment counselor will naturally evolve. It has been my experience that in an atmosphere where people feel listened to and valued, creativity blossoms. Perhaps the most significant challenge a school adjustment counselor may face is the attempt to create such an atmosphere in schools where people don't feel listened to and valued.

The school adjustment counselor's role in helping programs to emerge from the needs of the school might be as a person asking the staff, students, and parents what they think is missing, what needs to happen, what makes sense. I believe people respond to open-ended questions such as these when they do not feel judged, when they feel safe. Once again, we come to the notion of accepting, listening, valuing. When people feel stifled, criticized or used, there will be silence in response to questions.

My main concern in writing this handbook has been to communicate to you, the reader, a point of view, an approach to school adjustment counseling which I believe in passionately. I believe it makes sense. I believe it works. I believe school adjustment counseling viewed systemically will continue to be of extreme importance to all schools as they attempt to meet the needs of our students.

The handbook is very personal. It is written in the first person. I hope this style will make it easily readable for the reader. Of even more significance to me, I hope that my writing in the first person will convey to the reader that this is one adjustment counselor's view of how to do this complex job effectively. I hope that this approach will make sense to the readers and energize them, either corroborate what they are already doing or encourage them to try some different ways of doing things.

Since most of my twenty-two years as a school adjustment counselor have been in secondary schools, middle and high school, much of this handbook is written from a secondary school perspective. However, in the last two years I have been working from a very different perspective, entirely primary prevention, through a special grant which the School Department received as a result of a far-sighted point of view of both the Director of Special Education and Coordinator of Health Education in the Pittsfield Public Schools. My activities will be discussed in considerable detail in the section of the handbook dealing with Activities

for Teachers. As a result of this work I realize now that the philosophy which has pervaded my work in the secondary schools is totally applicable, and makes the same sense in the elementary schools. In fact, I've begun to realize the potential influence of a school adjustment counselor at the elementary school who adheres to a systemic perspective and views himself as a change agent.

Background

Definition Of Term: School Adjustment Counselor

I am uncertain as to what title to give this person who provides or facilitates these mental health services which I believe should be in schools in the 1990's. I shall use the term school adjustment counselor because that is the term most familiar to me, and it will have meaning at least for readers from Massachusetts. Sometimes the task of the school adjustment counselor is to decide what services are necessary. Sometimes the job is to provide direct services to students, such as individual or group counseling, but sometimes it's to mobilize the community. Often the task is to be a support person or resource to the staff. Perhaps, most importantly, it is to help establish a climate of acceptance spoken of earlier.

The school adjustment counselor, abbreviated as SAC, could have many possible titles. What is important to me, as I shall discuss further on in this chapter, is a

particular mind-set, an attitude about the role of schools in children's lives, the role of the school adjustment counselor in the school, and the possibilities for change.

History

School Adjustment Counselor is a Massachusetts term for a position called school social worker in many states. The position was established by the Department of Youth Services in Massachusetts in 1952 to place Master's level social workers in the schools to work with juvenile delinquents (the term used at the time) to keep these students out of prison. The Pittsfield Public Schools first hired school adjustment counselors at the very beginning of the program in 1952. I was hired in 1973. Each day of the week I arrived at one of the five schools to which I was assigned. The building principals would give me a list of students who were causing trouble. My explicit assignment was to help these children, but the implicit task was to make them "fit" into the school. I began using a casework approach as I was instructed to do. I wasn't in the job very long before I realized that most of the students I was seeing had a lot to deal with in their young lives. They seemed to have difficulty coping with stresses in school, but many seemed to respond, depending upon the approach used. I tried lots of different things, some successful and some not. Sometimes sitting down with a teacher to listen to the frustrations

of trying to teach a class while a child jumped out of his
seat seemed to make a difference. It occurred to me that
teachers needed to feel listened to. They were, and are
even more so today, attempting to teach students burdened
with many more problems than the students they'd seen in
their earlier training. Sometimes a student really perked
up when I observed him on the playground and commented that
he seemed to be a leader in kickball. Sometimes there was
a change after we had a classroom meeting to find solutions
to some mutual problems.

I don't know if it was planned that way, but I think
it was fortuitous that the Department of Youth Services
staff who established this position chose the title School
Adjustment Counselor (often referred to as SAC) and not
social worker, even though the term is cumbersome. I
believe it has helped in two particular ways. For many of
the families I've visited, social worker has a very
particular connotation, one which often makes them feel
inadequate or diminished. I am sure social workers do not
want to make clients feel inadequate, but the perception
for some families comes out of generations of involvement
with the system. For those families I've found it a
benefit to have a title which has no particular
connotation. On the other hand, many families have
unpleasant memories of their own experiences in schools,
and I needed to work hard to help them get over these
feelings. The key, regardless of the label, has always

been to help people feel not judged but accepted with all
their weaknesses. (I like to use the metaphor 'blemishes'
or 'warts' to illustrate in a graphic way human
imperfections.)

Perhaps the title, school adjustment counselor,
helped, too, with being accepted more readily by school
personnel because counselors are more often part of schools
than social workers. The term probably allowed me more
flexibility to change the position as seemed appropriate
when needs changed. I have found very little resistance to
changing priorities, refocusing, and continue to do that.
I believe that all staff who desire to be change agents
must be continually refocusing and re-evaluating the
climate of the school.

Brief Review Of Literature

As I've reviewed the literature in the field, I've
found some writers who have espoused a philosophy similar
to my own, but very little specific writing as to how to
"do" school adjustment counseling in the schools.

It is interesting to me that according to Rosemary
Sarri, when school social work began in the United States
about 1906, it had a strong developmental focus. (Sarri
and Maple, 1972.) Its major focus then was social change—a
school/community/family liaison function. Visiting teachers
performed a liaison function, explaining the demands of the
school to parents and gathering an understanding of the

family and neighborhood influences upon the child. That focus remained until the 1950's when school social work de-emphasized its focus on social change in the school and environment. The emphasis became much more clinical, was centered on the personality development of the individual child, had a much more disease or dysfunction orientation. Although I have not found a documentation in the literature, I suspect that this re-focus was to make the field more scientific, more "professional." I believe that thinking was unfortunate in that it neglected the primary task of the school as a developmental, not remedial institution. Interestingly, it was at this same time, 1952, that school adjustment counseling developed in Massachusetts. School Adjustment Counseling was established as a component of the Department of Youth Services, working with "juvenile delinquents" in the schools with the express goal of keeping them out of jail. When I was hired in 1973, some twenty years after the position had been established, the focus as explained to me was very much clinical, individual case-oriented. I was not in the position very long before I realized that this orientation was inappropriate in the school setting.

The literature, which I reviewed in anticipation of this handbook, taught me that my thoughts were not unique. I found several writers speaking to the developmental focus of the school. Lela B. Costin writing in 1975, in analyzing a national survey of the activities and roles of

school social workers, is critical that most defined their activities in terms of individual remedial services and gave little attention to modifying school conditions that contributed to the emergence or maintenance of problem behavior among students. She proposed some general strategies for augmenting system change and emphasized the importance of recognizing that the school is primarily an educational institution, rather than a context for providing therapeutic services to selected children.

Although she sees casework as one of the legitimate roles of school social work, Rosemary Sarri writing in 1972, makes a case for a changed orientation. She says that in the school setting, inter and intra-organizational work for change are essential. She also encourages school social workers to be involved in program development. She encourages vision and creativity, as well as assertiveness in including oneself as a valuable resource in the area of program development. In fact, she believes that school social workers who often have more expertise in individual and group (community) dynamics, should be designing community involvement, parent involvement activities and other group functions. (Sarri and Maple, 1972.)

The community psychologists who worked so diligently to try to establish that field in the 1960's developed a point of view which comes close to my thinking about the role of the school adjustment counselor in the 1990's. Seymour Sarason, writing in the late 1970's, sounded

somewhat frustrated at the directions community psychology was taking (similar to my frustrations about a "dysfunction" orientation for school adjustment counseling). Although his work went beyond education, his words make sense for me. "Community psychology was not intended to be restricted to psychopathology, but rather, it was a field that tried to see the community in its complexity." In his definition of how he sees the community psychologist, he says, "I refer to any instance in which an academic person takes on a socially responsible role--in government, politics, business schools, poverty agencies--which will allow him to experience the natural functioning of the particular aspect of society. The role must be an operational one with responsibility and some decision-making powers. He becomes an insider...he is at bat...he is not sitting in the stands passively observing the game and passing judgment on the players. He is in the game and he is a player. Finally, he assumes the new role not only to learn but to change and move things." (Sarason, 1977, p.10.)

Some thoughts of Jack Chensky, one of the presenters at a University of Massachusetts conference organized by Stuart Golann in 1973 to renew the state of the Community Psychology field, impress me as capturing the essence of what this person that I envision in the schools is about. He says that community psychology had a great appeal to him because "it is active, rather than passive; system

oriented rather than individual oriented, behavioral rather than verbal, and preventative rather than rehabilitative. Perhaps most important...optimistic and hopeful..." (Golann, 1975, p.43.)

I have often thought that if a school had not yet evolved to the point of having a school adjustment counselor, some of the functions I have talked about could be done effectively by other staff workers if they shared my philosophical view. Interestingly, another speaker at this same conference, Gershin Rosenbloom, posed some of the same questions that I pondered as I read. Mr. Rosenbloom has been a chief psychologist at a mental health center and a regional administrator for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. He asks why this person who has this involving, active change agent role needs to be a psychologist. "Why do we believe that psychologists are able to carry out this role any more effectively, for example, than a social worker, or a public health nurse?" (Golann, 1979, p.89-90.) I would add, or perhaps a teacher, or a vice principal, or a guidance counselor, if they possess a similar philosophy.

Certainly the activities which have to do with providing counseling and with making primary assessments as to distressed students' potential for suicide, etc. require a staff member with professional training. Schools that do not have at least Master's level counselors/social workers must refer all such concerns to local mental health

agencies. As I have said earlier, I would hope that every school would provide an on-site professional because the school is often the first and most consistent place to detect students having problems. Recognizing symptoms of depression in children who have been abused, is a task which schools are expected to do. For example, under Massachusetts law, school personnel are mandated reporters under threat of fine for not reporting suspected child abuse. It is frightening to teachers and others, particularly where there are no trained mental health professionals, when they must make these preliminary assessments of child physical and/or sexual abuse. In another instance, recently a school system in the Midwest was sued by the parents of a boy who had completed a suicide because they contended the school staff should have detected his depression and communicated it to them. Happily for the profession the school system prevailed but it is an example of the increasing expectations of schools in this regard.

However, I am accepting the reality, although extremely disappointed by it, that some schools are not yet ready to make mental health services a priority. For these schools, some of the programs and activities I will write about, although certainly not crisis assessments, individual and group counseling, can be provided by a variety of staff members providing the philosophy is

ascribed to and there is a willingness to take the risk of establishing new programs, of moving in new directions.

As I have illustrated, I discovered many writers who share my philosophical view of the role of the school adjustment counselor in the schools. However, I did not find any orderly delineation of the tasks or functions of the school adjustment counselor. I did not find a cookbook, a useful guide to help a new counselor deal with and perform some of the many functions which are part of the job. I have tried to write that handbook, hoping it will be of benefit to those who choose this career after me.

Actually, this handbook which I am submitting is a work in progress. The programs emanate out of my philosophy, and have been tailored to the needs of the school in which I work. I expect new programs will evolve as the needs develop. Just as I'm writing this section, our community is dealing with the unsolved disappearance and murder of a middle school student; the violent assault of an elementary school student on his way to school; a rash of house fires in the neighborhood of the high school in which I work; and the reality of the military call-ups to staff Operation Desert Shield in Saudi Arabia. Two days ago a science teacher in my high school received his notice to report to active duty in three days. I do not know yet how we will deal with all of this, but we have started to meet to discuss how we can help one another cope.

Systemic Point of View: In Synergy with Carl Rogers

Although I certainly did not know the term, systemic thinking, when I was interviewed for my position in the summer of 1973, my philosophy of school adjustment counseling was even then systemic.

I remember asking what must have seemed like a facetious question to the committee interviewing me. I remember asking what the term "school adjustment counselor" really meant. Was the counselor's task to adjust the child to the school, or the school to the child? It was certainly more unusual to talk about a systemic approach in 1973 than it would be today when a great deal is written and known about systemic approaches in dealing with families and other institutions.

I also didn't know about the Canadian psychologist, Alfred Bandura, when I asked that question at my interview, but in the late 1970's Bandura was studying the concept which he called reciprocal determinism and which was very relevant to my question. In answering the basic question in psychology, "Why do people act as they do?," Bandura's response is that the person, the environment and the person's behavior all interact to produce the subsequent behavior. In other words, none of the three components can stand alone in determining human behavior. (Bandura, 1986.) Deducting from this concept one could say that it is valid to say that behavior influences the person and the

environment as it is to say that the environment or the person influences behavior.

Systemic family therapy was in its infancy in the early 1970's. The writers whose names are now synonymous with the philosophy of looking at emotional problems in the total environment of people's lives rather than intra-psychically, were just getting into print. Gregory Bateson, generally considered the pioneer of the systemic approach to dealing with human problems, published one of his ground-breaking articles in 1971. (Bateson, Psychiatry, 34, 1971.)

In 1973, and even today in some circles, the task of the school adjustment counselor was to work with individual students; to fix them so they fit into society, the school community, and community-at-large. It was a model which expected the mental health worker to look within the client to diagnose the dysfunction and then to use psychotherapy and case management to improve the child's functioning.

My view of school adjustment counseling in 1973 differed from the one which saw the focus of difficulties primarily within the child and is not at all changed now after twenty-two years in the position. If the student is having difficulties, not learning, not attending, acting out, perhaps there is some intra-psychic problem or learning problem. Perhaps, though, there is something in the total learning environment which is not working properly, or perhaps there is tension among the different

parts of his life; perhaps hostility between the home and the school, or between the school and a social agency, or perhaps great tension within the student's home. In order to improve the situation for this student, all of the systems need to be working together, need to be moving in the same direction, need to be listening to and hearing one another.

Maybe the need is to bring all the significant people in a student's life into a meeting so everyone can stop blaming one another and start working together, appreciating one another, to solve the problem, or understanding that teachers who feel overworked and undervalued, as well as uncertain about their job security, need support in order to be effective as teachers. This is all part of a systemic point of view.

I do not mean to infer that students never need individual counseling. In fact, most students referred will benefit from at least some individual counseling, particularly to establish trust, but even then the focus is at least partially systemic, to help them understand the environment—family, school and community in which they live. I also do not mean to infer that students' problems are entirely environmentally determined. Surely there are differences in personality. Surely there are differences in people's abilities to cope with stresses in their lives. The assumption for those of us who are in education is that most people can learn and that most people want to be

successful and happy in their lives; that we cannot control all the factors in our students' lives; but that we can, by involving the many facets of the school and community environment, improve the chances for students to "make it."

Some may be wondering why I'm equating having a successful experience in school as synonymous with having a successful and happy life. As reported in a Massachusetts Department of Education handbook on our <u>Changing Schools and Communities,</u> "there was a time when a high school education was not essential to becoming a productive citizen and enjoying a relatively high quality of life. Today, however, dropping out has serious consequences for drop-outs, their families, and society." (Changing Schools and Communities, 1990.)

This point of view is explanatory to you as to why my handbook on school adjustment counseling covers a wide variety of areas in which I've been involved as a school adjustment counselor. To me each aspect is essential to being an effective school adjustment counselor. It is also what makes the job unique and exciting. The school adjustment counselor who is in tune with his school and community has the opportunity to involve himself in whatever parts of the system he wishes. As with much of my continuously emerging understanding of systems, I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to study systemic family therapy with some excellent people in the field.

One of the many things I learned in systemic family therapy training is that the counselor/therapist can decide where, how, and when to intervene in the family to make the greatest impact, to facilitate change.

As to this training, in 1978, school adjustment counselors and psychologists in the Pittsfield School system began meeting regularly with Dr. Evan Coppersmith (now called Dr. Evan Imber-Black) who was the Director of the Family Therapy Program at the University of Massachusetts, on a regular consultation basis, with a goal of improving our understanding of parents/families so that we could work more effectively with the students assigned to us. I then entered the doctoral program in counseling psychology at the University of Massachusetts, and took a sequence of courses in family therapy. It repeatedly occurred to me that the approach of the family therapists that I was studying, the systemic approach, pertained to schools and other large systems in similar fashion to families; that the factors which could make a family dysfunctional could also make a school dysfunctional and that some systemic interventions to help families could also help schools; that the same rules seemed to apply. Once the system's perspective permeates the school, it has an almost limitless impact on the environment.

Ron Short, in a book on structured family therapy's implications for organizational development, defines the system's model: "... every part of the system is seen as

organizing and being organized by other parts. An
individual's behavior is simultaneously both caused and
causative. A beginning or an end are defined only by
arbitrary framing and punctuating. The action of one part
is, simultaneously, the inter-relationship of other parts
of the system..... The individual no more acts upon the
world than the world on the individual. The cause and
effect turn out to be integral parts of the same event
(Short, 19xx, p. 7). Certainly these statements make sense
as a way of looking at the school environment, and on the
student's place in that environment, from a mental health,
as well as an educational point of view.

In addition to assisting me to establish and refine a
basic philosophy of the school adjustment counselor's
helping role as systemic, rather than intra-psychic or
within the client, some of the basic tenets of systemic and
strategic family therapy which I learned have been
particularly useful to me in dealing with students and
their families. They also have usefulness for other school
personnel in their interactions with students and families,
particularly the concepts dealing with blaming, reframing,
positive connotation, and joining.

The rule of linear blame spoken of by many of the
original writers in the field certainly has massive
implications for schools Teachers blame the
administration; students blame the teachers;
administration blames the teachers and the school

committee, and everyone blames the parents. When a
systemic perspective begins to work, everyone stops blaming
and says we are all part of the problem and, hopefully,
will all be part of the solution. I have found some of the
most satisfying meetings have been when I have invited
parents to a meeting regarding their child who is having
problems. I invite the student's guidance counselor,
vice-principal, classroom teachers, and ask the student and
parents if there is anyone else, such as a Department of
Social Services worker, who should be part of the meeting.
Although it may be somewhat overwhelming at first for the
student to have so many people in this room, talking about
him/her, I have found that when I can establish a tone that
no one is to blame, that we are all present because we care
about "John" and want to see what part each of us can do to
improve his situation, then these meetings are tremendously
helpful. In addition, students who are at first
overwhelmed and somewhat frightened by the large number of
adults, are energized by a reframing which comments on how
many adults care about them.

Recently, when a particular family/school meeting
wasn't progressing very productively, a vice-principal said
we probably didn't have all the important people in the
child's life present, a comment totally consistent with the
Milan Group's thinking. I doubt that this vice-principal
ever heard of Luigi Boscolo or Mara Palazzolli (two of the
principal members of the Milan Group), but their concepts

had permeated his thinking. In these meetings, I have found the Milan Group's neutrality approach very helpful. This encourages the family therapist to stay at a meta level, not allying with any one side, assuming the one-down stance, and I've tried to adapt that approach in these family meetings. In reality, this is often a difficult task. I need to remember that the parents see me as part of the school; the student sees me as one of the adults; and the school staff sees me as possibly aligned with the students. At these times, some of the more subtle of the structural approaches from Salvador Minuchin's work in family therapy are very useful. Minuchin, in his work on structural family therapy, talks about structural moves within the setting, such as where the therapist and/or family sit; whom one looks at, etc., as significant to empowering or blocking certain family members in the sessions (Minuchin, 1974). For example, whom I look at, where I sit or place others to sit in the room, these techniques can be very useful in a school, family meeting, or even a meeting within the classroom.

Perhaps the most useful techniques learned from strategic systemic family therapy training are the techniques known as reframing and positive connotation. To illustrate:

In a team meeting held to discuss how to better meet the needs of a student who was not attending school regularly, many local agencies involved with the family

were invited to attend. The early suggestion of the professionals at the meeting was to involve the Key program, an additional local agency. In addition to seeming like more of the same wrong solution discussed extensively by Paul Watzlawick (Watzlawick, 1974, p. 102), a major figure in the systemic family therapy movement, the suggestion seemed to make the parents unhappy. The guidance counselor present positively connoted the family's reticence as a desire to be in charge of their own lives and further suggested that it was too confusing for the child and family to be involved with so many people. I believe it was also validating to them when several of us indicated that it would be a relief to us for them to handle more of the responsibility for getting the student to school since we were overburdened by all of the budget cutbacks and they could no doubt be more effective. Throughout Mara Palazzolli and her colleagues' writings, we see them reiterate that through the positive connotation we implicitly declare ourselves as allies of the family's striving for independence and we do this at the moment that the family feels it is the most threatened. (Palazzolli, 1981.) A very clear example of this occurred at a recent team evaluation meeting. The subject was a fourteen-year old, intelligent, attractive girl who stayed out too late, etc. The mother was very shy and obviously frightened by the twelve professionals in the room. In turn, the girl's probation officer, guidance counselor, and the

vice-principal criticized the mother's inability to take charge of her daughter. When it was my turn, I suggested that during my home assessment visit it was quite clear to me that this mother loved her daughter very much and was so proud that she had not "enslaved" her daughter the way she herself had been enslaved by her mother. I realized immediately that this reframing had been very helpful to this mother. Chloe Madanes, another well-known thinker and writer in the field, encourages the therapist to look at the family in terms of helpfulness and caring, instead of looking for conflicts and strife (Madanes, 1981).

A risk in this kind of statement is the risk of alienating other professionals with a statement such as the one above. Once again the writers in the family therapy field are helpful in that they, especially the Milan group (Palazzolli and colleagues), talk about the use of a one-down attitude to enable the counselor, etc. to make statements in a non-judgmental way. By one-down, they refer to an attitude by which the counselor does not portray himself as the authority, but as an interested observer.

Although used extensively by the practitioners in the field as a basic technique of structural and strategic systemic family therapy, the concept of "joining" is explained by most as cogently, I believe, as by Carl Rogers, who is most readily identified as the founder of client-centered or non-directive counseling (he now prefers

to use the title person-centered approach). Rogers was a practicing psychologist as early as 1927, longer than a generation before systemic family therapy had even been talked about, but his early writings, as well as his more recent books, speak to an understanding of clients' and therapists' relationship with one another which to me transcends any particular style. There is a genuineness and sincerity in the caring of the therapist for the client, according to Roger, which establishes a climate in which much growth is possible.

I believe that there is a true synergy between systems thinking and Carl Rogers' approach, although I am sure many readers raise an eyebrow when I first mention this since Rogers is known for client-centered counseling, which he now prefers to call person-centered. Surely the reader might be thinking that this is in direct opposition to the systemic point of view which looks at the total environment. The word 'synergism' means the joint action of two agents which, when used together, increases each other's effectiveness. So, I believe it is with systems thinking and Carl Rogers' approach. I believe they need each other, that each enriches the other. To use a metaphor, the systems approach is like the frame of a house. It gives it form; it defines the whole picture. Rogers' approach is like the insulation or the interior design. It softens the whole; it gives it character. It enhances the frame.

I have been very fortunate because during my many years in the doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts, I have had Dr. Jack Wideman as my chief advisor and mentor. Dr. Wideman is a true student of Carl Roger's philosophy. He quotes Rogers as comfortably as most people quote their children's early efforts at talking. He has helped immeasurably in my developing a deeper and richer understanding of Carl Rogers, although I remember studying Carl Rogers about twenty-five years ago in my master's degree program in guidance and counseling. Rogers made sense to me then and he makes even more sense now after having lived much of my life in schools as a counselor. In a more recent book, A Way of Being, published in 1980, Rogers renames his philosophy person-centered counseling.

In talking about a climate for counseling, he says "There is absolutely nothing holding us together except a common interest in the dignity and capacity of persons and the continuing possibility of deep and real communication with each other (Rogers, 1980, p. 41)....... On the basis of my experience I have found that if I can help bring about a climate marked by genuineness, prizing and understanding, then exciting things happen. Persons and groups in such a climate move away from rigidity and toward flexibility, away from static living toward process living, away from dependence toward autonomy, away from defensiveness toward self-acceptance, away from being

predictable toward unpredictable creativity. They exhibit living proof of an actualizing tendency" (Rogers, 1980, p. 44). This is joining in its best sense.

I realize as the years have gone by that a major theme of my work with students, parents, school staffs and the general community has been to increasingly trust or value the process of our being together, to have confidence that if we are together in an atmosphere which is welcoming and validating to everyone's self-esteem, then things will happen positively, change will occur. I do not believe it's necessary to have carefully spelled-out agendas for all interactions, but I do believe we need carefully spelled-out environments. People need to feel safe, to know that they matter, to know that they will be heard if they choose to speak.

I now realize how much of this thinking emanates from Carl Rogers. He continues to discuss how positive attitudes emerge when this climate of acceptance and valuing people is present. As he often does, he speaks in the first person as to how he is affected in such an environment. "When I am exposed to a growth-promoting climate, I am able to develop a deep trust in myself, in individuals and in entire groups. I love to create an environment in which persons, groups and even plants can grow" (Rogers, 1980, p. 44).

In his recent book he briefly restates the central hypothesis of his person-centered approach which has been

the theme of his entire professional life. It has great

meaning for me, and, I believe, for all of the work of a

school adjustment counselor.

> Individuals have within themselves vast resources
> for self-understanding and for altering their
> self-concepts, basic attitudes and self-directed
> behavior. These resources can be tapped if a
> definable climate of facilitative psychological
> attitudes can be provided. There are three
> conditions that must be present for a climate to
> be growth-promoting. These conditions apply
> whether we are speaking of the relationship
> between therapist and client, parent and child,
> leader and group, teacher and student, or
> administrator and staff. The conditions apply,
> in fact, in any situation in which the
> development of the person is a goal. (Rogers,
> 1980, p. 115)

The first element could be called genuineness,

realness or congruence. The more the therapist is himself

or herself in the relationship, putting up no professional

front or personal facade, the greater is the likelihood

that the client will change and grow in a constructive

manner.

The second attitude of importance in creating a

climate for change is acceptance or caring, or prizing,

what I have called "unconditional positive regard." When

the therapist is expressing a positive, acceptant attitude

toward whatever the client _is_ at that moment, therapeutic

movement or change is more likely to occur (Rogers, 1980,

p. 116).

The third facilitative aspect of the relationship is

empathic understanding. This means that the therapist

senses accurately the feelings and personal meanings that

the client is experiencing and communicates this understanding to the client.... 'This kind of sensitive, active listening is exceedingly rare in our lives" (Rogers, 1980, p. 116).

Rogers talks about how this climate just described brings about change. He says as persons are accepted and prized, they tend to develop a more caring attitude toward themselves. The person thus becomes more real, more genuine. These tendencies enable the person to be a more effective growth-enhancer for himself or herself (Rogers, 1980, p. 117).

It has seemed to me as I've observed schools and students at all age levels in all types of classrooms over these many years, that when these facilitative conditions that Rogers talks about do exist, students feel differently about themselves and learning is enhanced. Now there is, indeed, a body of knowledge developing which in general supports Rogers' view that when these facilitative conditions are present, changes in personality and behavior do occur; that learning in schools is improved (Aspy, 1972).

As I read Rogers' discussion of the self-actualizing tendency in organisms, I realize that this term, which has unfortunately become educational jargonese, describes a theme which has been central to all of my thinking since I first began in this field. In 1973, when I first became a school adjustment counselor, I attended several weekend

retreats with school adjustment counselors from throughout
Massachusetts as part of the certification process.   I
bought a wall poster for my eight year old son who was
having a difficult time, always feeling that it was harder
for him to do well in sports and school than it was for
some of his friends. It read "Becoming Is Superior To
Being." As the years have gone by, I've realized both in
my work and in my personal life that we are always in the
process of "becoming." In fact, this thought is so
constant and so intense that it feels central to my being.
I cannot identify whether the learning came from Carl
Rogers or from living, but I believe that is at the core of
education, that some learning is infused within so that it
becomes almost automatic. Carl Rogers talks passionately
about this theme as he elucidates what self-actualizing
means to him. "Life is an active process, not a passive
one....under the most adverse circumstances, all organisms
are striving to become." This potent constructive tendency
is an underlying basis of the person-centered approach."
Rogers says it is the same for persons, small groups, or
even classroom groups (Rogers, 1980, p. 118).

Activities For Students

Individual Counseling. Although I will talk extensively about group counseling and classroom meetings in this handbook, individual counseling is still the cornerstone of adjustment counseling in the schools, as it is in most of the mental health profession. Often pragmatic realities do not allow the counselor to do as much of this as should be done, but I still try to see most students individually at least once. Certainly all the students who self-refer or who come for crisis intervention are seen individually at least once. Also, there are students who are not ready emotionally to be in a group. They need to begin to feel safe by seeing a counselor individually. Students who feel uncomfortable in the peer group, for example, need to progress slowly to group membership. They generally feel much safer in a one-to-one relationship. Group participation is often a goal for these students, but individual counseling is much more appropriate for them at the outset.

It is assumed that everyone who has been in a counselor training program has had extensive education in at least one, if not several, of the prevailing modalities in the psychotherapy field. Whether a counselor has a psychoanalytic framework, is a behaviorist, uses a primarily cognitive approach, etc., is a professional and

personal decision. Hopefully, most counselors arrive at a decision after extensive study of several modalities. I do have some concerns, however, about the effectiveness of some of these approaches in helping adolescents, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

For me, Carl Rogers' central concept of unconditional positive regard for the client is the foundation on which all of my work with students is based. Carl Rogers is so respectful of the client that his point of view, if fully integrated within the self of the counselor, nearly guarantees successful counseling with adolescents. Even those students who are experiencing a fairly "successful" adolescence are at a stage in their personal development of tenuous self-esteem. Carl Rogers teaches the counselor to so fully accept the client that he feels safe and worthwhile.

In addition, training in systemic family therapy which the Pittsfield Public Schools began over ten years ago with Evan Coppersmith, Ph.D., (now called Evan Imber-Black) when she was at the University of Massachusetts, has been extremely useful to me. It encourages a very different perspective when dealing with students. For example, rather than looking at students' misbehavior as an indicator as something inherently "wrong" with the student, I find myself thinking about the function of the misbehavior or symptoms in the system. I have found that there may be a dramatic change in a student's manner when

he realizes that I do not necessarily perceive him as the "problem" in the family, but perhaps the one holding up a red flag that this family is hurting. There is often a similar dramatic change when the student doesn't feel that he alone is responsible for the problems he may be having in a classroom. Similarly, students, often the most vulnerable members of the system, are triangulated into tensions between members of a school staff; or between tension involving family and school or an agency and the school. The systems approach has been extremely useful to me as a way of looking at students through a different frame, often changing the context.

For many years, I have been uncomfortable with traditional approaches to psychotherapy. I have often thought I must not be a "good enough" therapist (as in "good enough" mother) because I didn't maintain enough distance from the students. Several years ago I was doing family co-therapy with a psychiatrist. He criticized my style as being too warm, too caring. I said to him that I was being me. To do otherwise would be artificial. He suggested that since that was the case, I would probably never be a very good therapist since therapy requires distance; that therapists need to create boundaries in order to maintain distance in the therapeutic relationship. I certainly believe in some boundaries in counseling students, just as there need to be boundaries in all relationships in our lives. For example, I do not

encourage students calling me at home because my family is quite protective of our time together. On the other hand, I do not agree with therapists having unlisted telephone numbers. I believe it is essential to be available to clients when they absolutely need the connection. I say to students that my telephone is listed in the telephone book but that I hope they will respect that my family has needs too, just as I give them fully of my attention when I am with them. I assure them that if they genuinely need me, they should always know that they are permitted to call. In twenty years of working with adolescents, I have had about ten students (in my recollection) who have called me at home. Of that number, only two have been people who called frequently. I have found adolescents to be very respectful of my need to have a private life. I believe their respectfulness has been a response to the mutual respect in the therapeutic relationship.

I never had the confidence to verbalize my thoughts about the therapeutic relationship until I attended a seminar presented by Dr. Pamela Cantor in February, 1993. It was the annual Harvard Medical School Conference on Suicide. Dr. Cantor has for several years been one of the chief organizers and presenters at this conference. She is a lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. She is the President of the National Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention, as well as the past President of the American Association of Suicidology. In addition, Dr. Cantor is a

syndicated columnist for the Los Angeles Times and is a widely published author.

In her presentation entitled "Challenging Boundaries: Crucial Elements in Psychotherapy," she said everything I've been thinking these many years about counseling adolescents. A synopsis of her statements is as follows:

1. It is my belief that the boundaries in a therapeutic relationship are established for the benefit of the therapist and not for the patient.

2. A therapeutic relationship is not much more than a business relationship when strict distances are kept. It becomes a human relationship only when these boundaries are torn down.

3. The human part of therapy is the part that counts. It is not the number of years of training a therapist has, the titles attached to his name or the number of papers he has written that make an effective therapist. It is the depth of feeling that exists between the patient and therapist that makes the difference between progress and stalemate.

4. The therapist must be available to the adolescent. Therapy parallels parenting in the immediacy of an adolescent's concerns and need for the therapist's availability.

5. And just like parents, a therapist must be "real" and warm and reach the adolescent emotionally, be responsive without being too familiar.

6. To remain anonymous is counter-productive. A therapist must be involved in the patient's life, be a friend and an ally.

7. Boundaries help foster a belief in the therapist's omnipotence and this, too, is counter-productive.

8. Boundaries create distance, and distance is the last thing we want to create.

After hearing Dr. Cantor, I finally feel secure that this human involvement approach is one way to work with adolescents. I have felt for many years that my work with adolescents was progressing very well, that I was truly helpful to them. When I have thought about it, it has always made sense to me that since teenagers' self-esteem is so fragile, the helping person must do much reaching out to establish the relationship. One cannot wait for the student to do all the disclosing. That is difficult even in working with adults, but with teens, it is often disaster.

It is crucial to make the students comfortable at the outset. I begin the first session by telling the student the rules and who I am. Some students have never heard the term 'school adjustment counselor.' I believe it's very important for them to know the rules of confidentiality,

and the limits of my responsibilities where confidentiality
is concerned, before we begin our session. If they are not
self-referred, I then tell them why they have been
referred. Students feel much safer when they receive clear
information. That information coupled with genuineness on
the part of the therapist will help the student become
comfortable in the session. Once a student is comfortable
and does not feel judged, conversation becomes most
natural. I try not to ask too many questions, but to use
the techniques of reflective listening, using declarative
statements. Somehow it is much less threatening to a
student when I say, "You seem sad this morning" rather than
"Are you sad this morning?" This combination of factors;
the genuineness of the therapist, clear explanation of the
rules, and non-judgmental statements seem to work to make
individual counseling very effective.

I cannot conclude this chapter without some thoughts
distinguishing counseling from therapy. I believe that
individual and group counseling in the school setting are
certainly therapeutic but cannot truly be called therapy
(psychotherapy.) That is because of the realities of the
setting. In my private practice office I have no
interruptions, a fifty minute hour, clinical supervision.
In the school, I have none of those luxuries which make a
session "therapy." Therefore, I prefer to say that my work
in the school setting is hopefully very therapeutic, but I
title it counseling. This term somehow seems more

flexible, more compatible with the nature of the school
setting.

　　　　<u>Group Counseling</u>. Perhaps my most often used
counseling technique for the students referred to me is
group counseling.

　　　　When I began as a school adjustment counselor in the
school system in the early 1970's, this technique was being
used very little, if at all, although the concept of
counseling people in groups and/or providing group
psychotherapy had been written about many years earlier. I
am totally committed to group counseling, so I began using
this approach with students as young as second graders,
very early in my tenure.

　　　　For all students, particularly adolescents, I believe
group counseling makes excellent sense. I've had students
over the years who have told me their participation in a
group was the key to their "making it" in school. I think
it's important to remember the setting, however. Schools
are not, and I don't believe should be, mental health
centers. That awareness is a primary background for my
handling of counseling groups in a school setting. For
many students, the safety provided in the group anchors
them in the school. If the school seems too big, if the
classes seem overwhelming, participation in a counseling
group may be helpful.

　　　　What do I mean by safety? I mean a feeling that one
experiences in a loving home where the atmosphere

expresses, to use Carl Rogers once again, unconditional regard; where students feel valued and appreciated, even if some of their specific behaviors are not valued or appreciated. In a "safe" group a person can take risks; can just "be" in whatever manner he/she feels comfortable, provided someone else's freedom to "be" is not impinged upon. In a safe group, students can feel secure discussing their thoughts and experiences, expecting that group members may laugh at some things, but that they won't be laughed at.

I often have heard school administrators encourage the use of groups because financially it makes the most sense. I would encourage groups, for both elementary and secondary school students, even if they were not cost effective because I believe the benefits for many students to be excellent, although I do not minimize the bonus of their cost effectiveness.

In this past school year, I had two concrete examples of the importance of the counseling group. One of my groups, made up of seven boys, had met weekly for three years. When I returned to school in September, I discovered that in addition to the one student who had graduated the previous June, one boy had moved out of town to live with his mother, and one boy had transferred to another high school in the city. The four boys remaining in the group had complicated senior schedules; one, a cooperative work program which would take him out of the

building for much of the school day; and one in a
vocational shop. Since I had ten other groups scheduled
last year, I met with the students and told them that we
would not be able to schedule "group" this year.

One morning in January, two of the boys came to my
door and asked to see me. One, John, said that he was
"really messing up." He said he was using drugs daily
again and had moved out of his house. I was amazed at his
clear explanation of his situation, particularly because he
had never been one of the boys who spoke easily and
frequently in the group. He told my intern and me that he
really missed "group", that he had nobody who listened to
him or whom he could talk to. There was never a family
meal time. He said he waited for his group time every
week. Since I had less sense of John than probably any
other of the seven boys, I asked him what made group so
important for him. "It's the only place that I have people
who I trust and who listen to me," he answered. His simple
explanation was a powerful reminder to me of so many truths
about schools, about the students, about the culture. For
one thing, schools are places where most young people spend
a large part of their lives. Many young people have no
adults that they see regularly (family mealtimes almost
never occur in many homes.) I think the most amazing thing
about his revelation was that something which seems at
first looks so minimal is, in reality, so significant. The
group session lasts only forty-two minutes. The student

shares the time with six other students plus the guidance counselor or other staff member (who is the co-leader), and me. It seems amazing that so few minutes could make so much difference.

The other boy, Ron, had a situation which was equally compelling. He had to leave his mother when he was twelve because she was hospitalized for depression. He moved in with his father, stepmother, and stepsiblings. His father accepts no adult responsibility, stays out all night with various girlfriends, gets high with his wife when he does come home, talks to Ron as if he were a buddy about his girlfriends. Ron is the adult in the family. He makes sure the young stepsiblings get off to school, has two jobs to help pay bills, etc. (I referred the case to the Department of Social Services, but since Ron was seventeen, they took no action.) He said that "group" was the only place that he could relax. He was treated as a teenager, not as an adult, when he was there. He felt that group was the only time when he had people to take care of him. He said since group had ended, he was skipping school more and starting to get into trouble with some people outside of school. It saddened me to think that these two boys' lives were so devoid of positive relationships with adults that this forty-two minutes a week meant so much. On the other hand, it heightened my realization of the significance of the school counseling group.

<u>Group Membership</u>. Many years ago, a reporter from our local newspaper visited one of my middle school groups several times during a three week period, at the invitation of the students. Her primary question when she met with me at the end of the visits was, "Wouldn't every student benefit from being in a similar group?" I realized as I thought about it that was probably true. The goals of these school-based groups could probably be goals which would benefit any student in a school system. Realistically, there simply isn't enough personnel for every student to be in a group. Also, there has to be sufficient consensus among school staff that the student is hurting, that his/her emotional baggage is interfering with learning, in order to justify missing classes for group participation.

Stated as simply as possible, any student who would benefit from a safe setting to help him/her cope more effectively with the pressures of school and of growing up should be in a counseling group. Often students are very shy, sometimes they are experiencing loss, sometimes they're quite depressed, sometimes they're presenting symptoms of substance abuse or acting-out behavior. Some students have learning difficulties. Many students come from what I call upside-down families, like the boy, Ron, I talked about earlier. They have no place where they can be teens, not adults. They may have no positive adult role models to help them with the difficult choices that teens

are constantly facing. One common denominator for many of the group members is poor self-esteem.

The screening meeting described in detail on page is a helpful vehicle for receiving appropriate referrals for groups. Generally when a student about whom staff is concerned is being discussed, a consensus will emerge as to what services would be most helpful. Often, that service is participation in an ongoing weekly or biweekly counseling group.

Near the conclusion of each school year, the support staff (counselors, nurse, resource teachers, etc.) from the high school meet with their counterpart colleagues from the middle schools as part of our activities to facilitate the transition from middle school to high school. This meeting is another valuable tool for receiving referrals for groups. We explain the nature and goals of the groups and ask middle school staff members to suggest students who they think would particularly benefit from this experience. Students who have difficulty adjusting to new situations, in addition to the characteristics previously mentioned, are certainly high priority for group membership.

I try to meet with each student individually before beginning a new group. This session is an opportunity to become acquainted with the student, to explain about the counseling groups, to let the student know that the group is voluntary, to discuss the issue of confidentiality. It is also an ideal time to find out if there are students

with whom the student could definitely not participate in a group counseling experience. A note of caution: this discussion necessitates some professional judgment on the counselor's part. Realizing the nature of adolescent relationships, it is necessary to assess whether a current "fight" is a typical adolescent conflict which could be worked through perhaps quite effectively in the group setting, or if it is in fact a much deeper animosity which may jeopardize the development of the group.

In addition to students being referred for possible membership in a group by high school or middle school staff, a significant number of students refer themselves or come with a friend to ask if they may join a group. For example, at a very recent Chapter 766 team meeting, the ninth grade student for whom the meeting was scheduled, asked very directly at the point in the meeting when services were being discussed, if she could join a group. She said she had difficulty making friends, and even more difficulty keeping friends. She said, "Maybe kids my age can help me figure out why I mess up." While most fourteen and fifteen year olds do not present themselves that assertively in a room full of adults, a point, by the way, which was certainly acknowledged when we discussed her strengths, self-referral is quite common and accounting for about fifteen percent of the eighty students whom I currently see in counseling groups.

When initiating specific topic-focused groups, as opposed to the ongoing general groups discussed above, group membership is established quite differently. For example, we have invited our local Hospice to facilitate an eight session bereavement group in our school within the school day. All staff members are informed of the group and encouraged to suggest students who have experienced a death of a family member or close friend in the past year or two. Perhaps more importantly, there is an announcement repeated for one week on the daily bulletin informing students of the group. The announcement tells them that the group is forming; that it will continue for eight weeks; and that they may come to the first session and then decide if they would like to continue. They are encouraged to sign up in the guidance office and to talk to their guidance counselor or school adjustment counselor if they have further questions. In the cases of the students referred by school staff, I see each of those students individually to tell them that we are beginning a bereavement group for students who have experienced the death of someone close to them, and encourage them to attend. I assure them that attendance is purely voluntary, that the decision is very individual, that there is no single, absolute way to grieve which is right for everyone. I talk to them also about individual timetables; that people grieving for a friend or relative vary as to when, and if, they are ready to participate. One student

may be ready to participate in a bereavement group two
months after a relative or friend dies. Another student
may not be ready for two years or not at all. I am
particularly careful to stress this to make sure no student
feels guilty if he/she does not wish to participate. I
encourage them to tell their parents about the group. Some
students feel very comfortable informing their parents and
allow me to call their parents to answer their questions
about the group. It is interesting, however, that many
students do not want their families to know they are
participating in a bereavement group. I strongly suspect
that this is a significant aspect of how the family and/or
student are coping with the loss. So often, it seems,
family members do not do the grieving they each separately
and together need to do because they try to protect one
another. With all the publicity that grief has received in
recent years, the prevailing notion still seems to be
denial of feeling, fighting the outlet of tears. The group
leaders deal with these kinds of issues within the
sessions.

Establishing group membership for the substance abuse
groups is done somewhat differently. In the section of the
handbook dealing with agencies providing services, I
discuss in more detail the local Council on Alcoholism and
Addictions presence in the high school. The worker, hired
by the Council, with the approval of the school adjustment
counselor and the school system's health coordinator,

spends two days a week in the building. She currently leads three groups: one for students returning from residential treatment facilities who need help in continuing not to use alcohol and other drugs; one for students who acknowledge that they have a problem with substance abuse but are not ready to change their behavior and stop using; and children of alcoholics group.

Establishing group membership is easiest for the first group, students returning from residential settings. These students acknowledge they have a problem, are connected to a variety of local services and have their families involved. When students return from inpatient settings, we strongly encourage a re-entry meeting with the student, his parents, staff of the residential facility and our own school staff. We discuss the group as a service which is available if the student chooses to participate. If there is not a re-entry meeting, the student meets with the substance abuse counselor once at least, to learn about the services and decide together with the counselor whether to participate.

I do not adhere to any particular theory or philosophy of group counseling. The school counseling group is primarily established as a safe, confidential setting for students to build trust in one another as a way to help them cope with their problems. I believe each student should know why he has been referred to the group and

should be helped to establish in a relaxed way short and long-term goals for himself.

Group rules should be established at the outset and reiterated frequently so that students are very clear about them. No student is required to be in a group (or in individual counseling). He may leave at any time he chooses. He may leave a session while it is in progress if he feels he cannot handle the situation. It is hoped that he will discuss with the group in the near future his reasons for leaving so that trust is not damaged. There are very few rules, but they are clearly stated and repeated often. I discuss the rules with the group members at the first session, letting them know the rules I am establishing and giving them an opportunity to give input as to any additional ones they may want. My rules are: 1. Confidentiality—what is said in this room stays in this room. 2. You may pass in any conversation. 3. One person talks at a time. 4. No one is laughed at, although laughter is wonderful, and hopefully, we will laugh together frequently.

The most important, and most difficult, rule is confidentiality. I state it clearly, and early in the first session, defining the term as "What is said in this room stays in this room." I have a banner-sized sign on the wall which spells out the word. We talk a great deal, giving examples of what confidentiality is and the potential difficulties in achieving it. I try to discuss

very fully with them the exceptions to the rule of confidentiality for me, just as I do when students first come to individual counseling sessions. They are told that disclosures of abuse, of suicidal or homicidal feelings and thoughts are not confidential; that they must be communicated. In subsequent weeks, we repeatedly talk about the concept. It's important to restate the concept of confidentiality frequently to firmly implant it in the students' minds. I am always impressed as to how seriously students consider this rule. In these twenty years I recall very few breaches of confidentiality among the students, regardless of age.

I explain to the students that my second rule is a response to a long-standing issue in my life; that is, that I am uncomfortable and have a great fear of embarrassment that I may not know the answer when called upon. As a result, I do not call upon anyone to respond in "group." A primary goal is safety and I do not believe people feel safe when they are concerned about being called upon. For a long time I felt uncomfortable about disclosing this personal feeling but continued to do so because it "felt right." Recently an intern said that this level of disclosure seemed to model candor, helped students to take risks, to not feel ashamed of their own feelings, and this enhanced the safe atmosphere. Adolescents who are struggling with identity issues, intimacy issues and separation issues seem to be powerfully affected by the

knowledge that adults, even those in helping or authority positions, have feelings which are difficult for them. Self-disclosure always poses risks; there is no substitute for professional judgment in deciding when and how much to disclose.

The third rule, one person speaks at a time, also meets one of my needs and helps students to learn how to listen. I tell them that I like to be listened to when I speak because that enhances my self-esteem. I assure them that one of my goals is that they will be listened to when they speak. This discussion is an excellent opportunity to do some teaching about listening. It is not necessary to use textbook terms such as reflective listening. Role modeling of good and bad examples of listening is excellent, and fun for the group members.

This presentation and discussion of seemingly elementary rules for the group is totally compatible with my view of school counseling groups. In my experience, the biggest error made by new counselors in running school-based counseling groups is that they forget to differentiate between the setting of a mental health center and a school. I have the students for forty-two minutes, not the seventy-five or ninety minutes which is more typical for a mental health facility. When they leave my office, they have three minutes to arrive at the next class. I believe that a school counselor needs to keep that awareness in the forefront of his/her mind. There is

a level of "opening up" which is a significant aspect of psychotherapy which I do not encourage in a school setting. On some rare occasions this happens anyway, and I deal with it on an individual basis, using other school resources such as the nurse and parents, if it is appropriate.

In the school setting, I believe an activist group leader works most effectively. By this term 'activist,' I mean a take-charge leader. I begin the group, begin all introductions by first telling about myself, and spell out the rules. I conduct discussions when we talk about the rules because there is much educational value in this discussion. This technique generally makes it possible to move more quickly and students feel safe, generally knowing what to expect. A leaderless or more non-directive group can be a superb therapeutic experience but it takes much more time and I believe is less compatible with the school setting. It is also easier to control the level of self-disclosure when the counselor is the group leader.

Co-Leadership. If at all possible, I try to have another staff member act as a co-leader in each of my groups. This has practical, philosophical and clinical benefits. From a practical standpoint, I am also the crisis intervention person in the school, as are most school adjustment counselors. Sometimes I am called out during a group session and must respond immediately, although any good clinical judgment would advise against that. From a philosophical standpoint, having guidance

counselors, regular classroom teachers and special education teachers as co-leaders is an excellent way to strengthen the positive attitude toward mental health services in the school and to enhance the general emotional climate of the school. From a clinical point of view, co-leadership is advantageous. Often the co-leaders use the technique which is called "gossiping in the present." We talk to each other about the student while the student and group are present. It is often very helpful to adolescents who have not heard their situation and/or personalities talked about previously. It provides them with language to talk about their emotions and/or situations. In addition, students may relate to one leader or the other more easily. Often the presence of another adult gives the counselor, who is the primary facilitator, a much needed respite.

Group Composition. I have experimented with groups in many possible configurations and have never observed any pattern emerge as to which are most effective. I've had groups of students all in the same grade, and groups of 9th through 12th graders. I've organized groups around a specific topic such as substance abuse or grieving, and have had some groups where there are totally different presenting problems. Some groups have been long term, even extending six years, from the beginning of middle school until graduation from high school, and some very brief, only six sessions. My slowest experimentation with

different configurations was around gender. Recently, I
co-led a ninth grade counseling group with both boys and
girls, having been hesitant to try that configuration
since an 8th grade co-ed group failed about ten years ago.
My definition of a failed group is one in which the group
never becomes a cohesive unit. Here, once again, the focus
is much more on process than on content. Different groups
cover different topics, but the core goal is safety; the
core functions are connectedness and trust. I assumed,
when re-evaluating the unsuccessful group, that much of the
difficulty surrounded the developmental stage of 8th
graders. I am not clear whether there is a total change in
developmental readiness from 8th to 9th grade; whether the
key factor is the move to the high school; whether the
chemistry of the particular group of students involved; or
the lapse of ten years is the crucial difference. Clearly,
this recent co-ed group worked. The students expressed the
desire to continue the group in 10th grade and did so.

In general, it has been my experience that high school
groups can be single sex or co-ed, as can groups in the
primary grades, but that middle schools are easier to
handle one gender at a time. If the groups are organized
around a common concern, i.e., children of alcoholics or
students coping with divorce, the age and grade range
really doesn't matter. If the group's goal is adjustment
to high school, I prefer all 9th graders or some 9th and
some 10th graders. It is difficult for me to make absolute

statements because I've seen groups in various configurations become quite successful and some groups which seem to be very homogeneous not work as well.

Another group composition issue relates to group size. Usually I feel that groups should have at least five members and no more than nine members to work well. There seems to be a "critical mass" necessary for the group process to function well and for the session to not simply consist of a few teenagers meeting with one or more adults and talking. The upper limit of nine is often too large for students to feel heard, particularly in the forty-two minutes of the group session. In reality, many of the students have attendance problems so there are usually one or two students absent and the end number is seven. You are perhaps wondering why I include nine students in a group if the number is too large. The educational setting is not a "perfect world." Often the counselor needs to compromise to be compatible with the needs of the school. Currently I have ten ongoing groups per week. I have no more time to start new groups so I try to accommodate as many students as possible.

I continue to be impressed by the reality that there are few absolutes, that many things "work" depending upon need, commitment and charisma. Recently I met a counselor who told me he has fifteen students in a group and the group has become cohesive and is working well.

This issue of group membership and size has some problems which must be considered. Once a group has been formed, I tell students that they will have input as to new members joining the group. I ask their cooperation regarding confidentiality issues, of course, and regarding the purposes of group, to help students better cope with their lives. Sometimes one or more students will say that they don't like a particular student. I inquire as to whether they think "group" might be able to help this person to improve in those areas that group members find objectionable. Very often when students are appealed to as potential helpers, they are comfortable welcoming students they might otherwise reject.

Membership is somewhat more complicated to establish for the group of students who acknowledge that they have a problem with drugs or alcohol, are willing to meet but not yet willing to give up using. Sometimes when a particular student is discussed at the screening meeting, the issue of possible substance abuse is raised. The student is generally referred to an adjustment counselor for a preliminary assessment. At this session I try to explore the area of substance abuse and suggest that the student could see the substance abuse counselor if he/she chooses. Confidentiality is almost always a problem in this situation. If the student acknowledges that he may have a problem, he is almost always unwilling at this point to have his family know. I have made the difficult decision

that it is most important to get the student some help. Getting the student to the point where he/she will finally tell parents is a major counseling goal, discussed regularly in the sessions. If parent permission and/or notification were required, very few, if any, students would be willing to participate. The success of this approach has been clearly seen in recent years. In the course of the last school year, seven students who participated in the group ultimately told their parents about their substance abuse problem. Five went to short term residential settings. Two stayed within the community and received services on an outpatient basis. Several of the students who participate in this group have been brought by their friends who are already in the group. Some referrals come from parents who know about their child's problem and are helping them to get services. It is always much smoother when this is the situation. Unfortunately, this scenario is more the exception than the rule.

The question I am asked most frequently by interns or new counselors is "How do I begin?" Once again, there is no absolute correct answer.

I generally begin the group by asking people about their week. Do they have anything they want to talk about? A very effective question has been, "Is anyone here worried about anyone else in group?" Almost always one of these two questions elicits enough material to "take off." If

there is a lack of material, which seldom happens, I bring up some current issues which have the potential for helpful discussion. The group is more educational or values-oriented at this point. We might discuss an article on date rape or driving while intoxicated. I have realized in recent years that the group's educational value is significant in the lives of student who may have few, if any, adult role models, no family mealtimes, little attendance at church or synagogue.

On frequent occasions, students come to the group session angry at one or several members of the group. Typically the tension first comes to my attention because a group member sits quietly, often averting everyone's gaze. I have a technique which I call "scratching my head" which usually elicits some information. I say "I'm not sure but I get the sense that something's wrong today. Mary doesn't seem to be herself." This laid-back stance, without asking any questions, but rather, reflecting on the here and now situation, seems to be helpful. As the student talks about the situation, I try to reflect on the positive things; that it's excellent that she brought up a painful situation and we are using the group to work it through. It is certainly not easy when there are animosities within the group, but one must surely expect these to occur. Tensions would probably occur in any group, but probably more so when a counselor is dealing with groups of twelve to

eighteen year olds in varying complex stages of life development.

Some steps in establishing groups in mental health settings simply take too much time to be practical in the school setting. For example, it is established procedure in most mental health settings to require an individual interview before a person joins a group. Again, remember the uniqueness of the school setting. Do not try to duplicate a psychotherapy group in a mental health center. The crucial word, I think, is flexibility; an attitude of "we'll try something, we'll make changes if necessary, we won't be wedded to any one group counseling concept", is most helpful. The key is the belief that the group makes sense, that attendance is a privilege, but is voluntary; and that they can always feel safe in "group."

These groups fit so well into the school because learning is a key component. The students learn about themselves, about how they operate with other people. Hopefully they learn how to be with other people, how to listen, how to make choices which are good for them. They become aware that although they may have had difficult problems in their lives, that they can make choices which will hopefully improve the direction of their lives. They can change the victim mentality which has been central to many of the students' lives. They learn that we are all, and always, in the "process of becoming", that we continue to grow and that we can change. The focus of these groups,

121

as is the focus of education, is on helping adolescents to grow, to develop. Hopefully in this safe setting, as they learn to trust, they will develop a sense of what they want to be, they will understand their own capacity for change, and will develop strategies for coping with situations they may encounter.

Peer Education. Peer counseling—peer support—peer education: it is an idea whose time has come. Every conference, every journal, has some mention of peer support when education/mental health are discussed.

Although I am a strong supporter of the concept and have been actively involved in starting and maintaining a program at Pittsfield High School for the last eight years, I believe there must be a great deal of training and ongoing supervision for these programs to work well. An attitude regarding peer support has developed which I hear too frequently and which concerns me. Its tenets include the notion that these programs can and do solve all of our current problems; that students prefer talking to their peers; that schools are providing for their students' mental health needs by having a group of peers available to help fellow students.

My first concern is the name—peer counseling. I do not believe this name should be used. The name suggests that the students are trained counselors, or even psychotherapists. Often there is a too-romanticized notion, I believe, even by professionally trained adult

counselors, that student peers can solve all problems. This attitude is certainly exacerbated by the "infallibility" of youth. I much prefer a less emotionally-charged title. Examples are peer helpers, peer educators, peer resource team members. We call our program at Pittsfield High School the Peer Resource Team.

There are many models of peer support programs in schools. Some give credit and are scheduled into the school day, a good idea when this is possible. The major advantage of this model is the opportunity for continuous training for the students and regular communication between the students and the adult leadership.

Our Peer Resource Program includes sophomores, juniors and seniors. Students apply in May of the school year. They are interviewed by the supervisor of the peer team, and sometimes an additional staff member. I believe it is a good idea for the school adjustment counselor to be part of the interviews when possible. The peer team supervisor tries to actively solicit students from the various segments of the school. Otherwise, there is a tendency for all of the students to come from the group which would more typically be involved in school activities, and therefore, neglect being helpful to many students who could benefit from the help.

An essential component of the program is the training which takes place in the summer. Students are required to participate in a week-long, 40-hour training session in

August of each year. In the first two years of the program, our school system had money from a grant to pay the students for two weeks of training, although the one week of forty hours falls well within general guidelines of twenty-five to forty-five hours suggested in the Massachusetts Department of Education guide. (Everyone's Guide to Peer Counseling, Spring, 1972.) Students receive training in listening skills. They deal with human sexuality, substance abuse, teen depression, suicide, eating disorders, physical and sexual abuse. Representatives from the Family Planning Council, the Berkshire Council on Alcoholism and Addiction, and the local mental health agencies conduct some of the sessions. They talk about confidentiality and boundary setting. A school adjustment counselor conducts the training piece on understanding the peer's role in the school setting; what they are, and what they are not. I see the role of the peer resource team members as first responders to the students. I tell them you are "the tentacles on the octopus." I suggest to them that they reach out to their own communities. They know when their friends are hurting; at a school dance, at a party, at lunch, talking on the phone-anywhere. As a result of their training, it is hoped that they will know how to talk and listen to their friends. They should know how to get help for their friends, to let them know about resources in the community.

In fact, it is crucial that they know when a referral needs to be made.

The key to our program is the supervisor of the peer resource team. In the original grant which established the program eight years ago, there was a small amount of money (a few thousand dollars) to pay a supervisor. While not enough money to recruit a professionally certified teacher or counselor, Pittsfield was extremely fortunate to obtain the services of a woman who had been a community social services volunteer for many years. She knew the agencies and services in Pittsfield, and even more significantly, established excellent relationships with students. She was at one high school three days a week, and the other high school two days a week after the program became mandated by the School Committee. (After one year as a pilot, the School Committee accepted the Peer Resource Team as a regular program in Pittsfield's two high schools.) She met with each of the twenty-five students in our program regularly. In reality, twenty-five is a large number with which to keep actively involved. In schools which do not have peer resource team meetings as a course, or regularly scheduled meetings within the parameters of the school day, I do not believe the team should be any larger than twenty-five. Actually, fifteen to twenty is a more manageable number. This is because it is crucial to meet regularly with each of the peer helpers. Even though the students are trained in the limits of confidentiality and

repeatedly reminded of the necessity to communicate concerns about students' depression, they still tend to be hesitant to report to their supervisor. In addition to reporting this kind of information to the supervisor, students are required to let her know if they are seeing a student repeatedly (more than three times). They are not required to give the supervisor the names unless the concern involves suicide, homicide, or physical and/or sexual abuse, but we believe in close supervision. While, of course, not able to exactly replicate the excellent peer team supervisor in Pittsfield, every community probably has someone who could excellently fill this role in their school. The keys are flexibility and a good working relationship. Currently, Pittsfield has expanded the supervisor's role, having a full time person in each high school to supervise the Peer Resource Team and coordinate the Peer Mediation Program.

I believe it is crucial for the supervisor of the Peer Resource Team to communicate daily with the school adjustment counselor in the building. A direct supervisory relationship should be established so that there is clarity in dealing with crises which may arise. The supervisor should inform the school adjustment counselor about students who he believes to be in crises. The peer team supervisor is a regular member of our bi-weekly screening meeting which will be discussed in the section titled Screening Meetings. This on-going communication is crucial

to the success of the peer program. The students understand that they are part of a team of people who are involved with helping the students in our school. One of the major benefits, I believe, is that they can let their friends know that there are people in the school and community to help them with their problems. Without this tight networking/supervisory structure, I do not approve of peer helper programs. There is too much potential for misunderstanding, for students on the peer team to act inappropriately. It is not fair to either the students who are peer helpers or the students who are supposedly being helped for the peer resource members to become miniature, or as I call them, sidewalk therapists. I have consulted in schools where I have seen tragic results where students have functioned as counselors without any clear accountability, education, or supervision. Used properly, a peer resource team is an excellent addition to the mental health component of the school; good for the school and a positive experience for the students on the peer resource team.

Activities For Staff

Working With Teachers. The role of the school staff is so crucial to the total environment of the school that I would have a very difficult, if not impossible, task making a decision whether to work with staff or students if I were forced to make a choice. (With the declining budgets which

have become the major educational issue to be faced by our school system each spring, perhaps the hypothetical situation is not so farfetched.) I believe if I can help one teacher increase his/her awareness of the people sitting in the chairs each day, I will have made a significant contribution. Secondary, as well as elementary school teachers have been under increasing pressure regarding academic standards. They are bombarded with new initiatives to improve students' academic performance. There seems to be very little awareness that these students sitting in the classroom are also people, that many of them carry extraordinary problems, that they do not leave those problems outside the school door, that they are part of them. A teacher who understands this about his/her students and incorporates this awareness into his/her teaching is a superb asset in improving the mental health climate of the school.

The school adjustment counselor needs to become a part of the school before he/she decides what specific activities will be beneficial with staff. No program will be successful if you do not have the staff's confidence. It's much easier to build that confidence if you are an integral part of the school, seeing people in the cafeteria, being present at school functions. Not only are you physically present, but you really do become aware of, and share, experiences with the staff. In a more subtle way, the mere presence of the school adjustment counselor

heightens awareness of staff to mental health concerns. One of the best ways to decide what help staff members need is to listen to them. Their situation will become very clear when you are a part of the school environment. In reality, their situation is often your situation. In fact, the school adjustment counselor must be fully integrated to be effective.

In a large high school, there's a tendency for each department to isolate itself. The school adjustment counselor needs to reach out to everyone. I remember coming to my high school of 1500 students and using most of my energy to connect to the students referred to me and then having no ability to network on their behalf. The problem was mine; the solution was within me also. I started to walk around the building, to stop in at the offices of each of the departments. Each time a student was referred to me I went to at least some of his/her teachers. At the elementary school level, this involvement with teachers is much easier since, of course, students stay with one teacher most of the day and have limited have mobility around the building. It is quite natural to talk to the teachers while getting the student and again after returning the student to the classroom. At the secondary level it often happens that the SAC has no involvement with the student's teacher or teachers. I have found that most students are very willing to permit me to talk to their teachers on their behalf. I have learned that I can talk

to teachers about a student's situation in general enough terms (provided the student is comfortable with my doing that) so that the teacher is a help to the student and at the same time, the teacher is absorbing some general information which heightens his/her own awareness about mental health concerns. A few years ago, I commented to an English teacher in the high school that often a student communicates strong feelings, such as thoughts about committing suicide, in an English paper. I discussed with her my belief that a student would probably share such a serious thought only with a teacher that he/she respected and that he (the teacher) needed to see the student and communicate at least three points: 1. Let him/her know that you "heard" what he was writing; 2. That you are concerned about him; 3. That there are people in this building who care and perhaps can help. A few days later the chairman of the English Department asked me to meet with the entire department to talk to them about adolescent depression and suicide. I met with the teachers at a one hour faculty meeting. I encouraged them to be alert to significant feelings expressed by the students in their writing or conversations. I shared with them my feeling that if they felt comfortable doing so, they as the teacher should be the person contacting the student first, not me, since the student must trust that teacher a lot to share such a powerful thought.

That first year I was invited to three departments to talk to the staffs about similar concerns. The presentations were informal and short as teachers are very tired at the end of a school day and such physical concerns need to be respected. I gave some information and listened.

The next year I was more assertive and asked each department head if I could attend a meeting of the department to talk briefly about school adjustment counseling and to gather input from them as to how I could help the teachers. Five departments accepted my offer.

Once again, I observed my own rule not to go where I wasn't invited. High school teachers need to be ready to think about their students in a "whole" way. Those teachers who perceive their role as only teaching the specific subject and do not think about the readiness of the students to hear them are not yet ready for much involvement with the school adjustment counselor.

Staff Support Groups. After some years working at the high school, I had the sense that the staff needed even more support from me than I was providing. I had several ideas but followed my belief that ideas and programs must come from consensus developed by the educational staff, not imposed on them from administration.

With the support of the principal, I sent a notice to everyone that we were certainly seeing larger numbers of students with emotional problems and that our jobs were

becoming increasingly stressful. I scheduled a voluntary
45 minute meeting with them after school to brainstorm as
to how we could help each other cope with the stresses of
trying to teach increasingly complex and voluminous
information to an increasingly problem-filled student
population. Thirty-one staff members (out of a possible
115) attended the session. About ten of them wanted
didactic presentations about topics such as sexual abuse
and teenage depression. The remaining twenty responded
positively to my suggestion that we could get together on a
regular basis just for mutual support. I was particularly
pleased with this emerging interest because I believe that
the best way to increase teachers' awareness of the impact
of emotions on learning is to deal with the individual
teacher's own emotions. Thus, the support group was begun
nine years ago. The group meets once a month for one hour
immediately after school. I am the facilitator but the
group established its own rules. People can talk about any
topic, or not talk at all. We have no agenda. In this
setting, the lack of an agenda appears to increase
everyone's comfort. Topics emerge from the group.
Teachers appear to feel validated by the awareness that
their thoughts and feelings are significant, that anything
they want to discuss is "okay." They begin to feel, just
as students do, that they have a right to have feelings,
and that other people will want to hear about them. The
response they receive from the other teachers present,

support of the feelings they're expressing, perhaps some sharing of similar feelings from other teachers, is very validating to their self-esteem. Everyone likes to feel listened to. Everyone likes to feel that other people share similar feelings or are willing to talk about different feelings. Just as this is so helpful to students in counseling groups, it is extremely helpful to staff members. People eventually learn to trust the process of the group; the important thing is that we come together, to talk and listen to one another. They begin to realize that our coming together is what matters, that ideas will emerge from our being together in the same room in a spirit of wanting to be together, of wanting to listen to one another. My hope is that this understanding that the trusting atmosphere generates the ideas and energy for the group will get translated into their classrooms, that they will realize that content is not taught in isolation and that the atmosphere of the classroom is a powerful factor in the learning which takes place. People frequently address some issue which is of concern to them. Sometimes we just laugh; sometimes we cry. All staff members are invited to each session, although the membership of the group has remained fairly constant. The attendance has fluctuated from a minimum of eight to a maximum of fifteen at most sessions. We meet in a fairly small conference room which is located as part of the media center. It is centrally located in the building as part of the mainstream

of school life. The setting is significant to my

philosophy of mental health integrated into the fabric of

the school. As with all group meetings, the room size is

significant. The small size enhances the safe feeling of

the group. Confidentiality is the general rule but if

there is consensus that something should be communicated

out of the group, the group decides who should be the

conduit for that communication. The approach is

deliberately low key. I do not stop teachers in the hall

and ask them if they are planning to attend. I do not talk

about the group, except in a very general way, to

administrators and others in the school system. In the

first two years my only feedback was that people continued

to attend more or less regularly. After a couple of years

of the group being a rather accepted fact at one high

school, the principal told me he had included the existence

of a staff support group as a promising practice in our

schools for a report he had made to the National

Association of Secondary School Principals. In the same

year I've received several requests to write an article

about the support group's existence for the teachers' union

newspaper and the school department's inter-school

newsletter because other school system staff were

enthusiastic that such a group would be beneficial to them

in their own schools. Our staff support group was

commended in the report of the evaluating committee

evaluating our school in its ten year evaluation cycle.

The group rules, much like those in the student counseling group, adhere to my own philosophy. I do not see the staff support group as psychotherapy. There is no confrontation or struggle for group leadership. I do not like to be called upon to respond against my will, so people are not required to speak. Everyone is accepted whether he attends regularly or once in a while and whether he speaks a lot or prefers to listen to others. My sense, after nine years, is that there is no magic, but that the group works. It seems to be meeting its goal of providing a service to school staff and enhancing the climate of the school as a caring place. The group's existence acknowledges that "teachers are people" and that teaching in the 80's and now 90's is an increasingly complex business.

In addition to the specific program of providing a staff support group and didactic topical presentations, I believe that my role as a school adjustment counselor is to be a resource to the teachers. "We are all in this together" is certainly the central theme when considering my role with teachers. It is a combination of providing information, mutual support, sometimes a sounding board, and most importantly, validating them as significant people in children's lives. The teachers, as so many other people in our culture, seem to see mental health, i.e., therapy, as some kind of mystical, distant phenomenon. I see the school adjustment counselor's role as demystifying mental

health. I try to let teachers know that they are significant in helping their students deal with their emotions; that their involvement is "therapeutic." I distinguish that from traditional psychotherapy, but try to show them that psychotherapy is not the only tool to enhance students' self-esteem. I have encouraged teachers to participate in home visits, in family counseling sessions, and in mental health conferences. I encourage teachers at my high school to attend case conferences, Chapter 766 team meetings, and screening meetings. (These last two activities will be discussed in greater detail in another part of this paper.) Perhaps the most important advantage of all this is breaking down the notion of we/they. We are all part of the mental health climate of the school.

Screening Meetings. One of the most effective techniques I've encountered to help students, while simultaneously helping the staff and enhancing the climate of the entire school, is a meeting of staff which we call a screening meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a coordinated approach to helping students who are experiencing problems. Its net effect, when it works effectively, not only helps the student, but decreases the isolation and frustration felt by teachers, administrators, and support staff, and ultimately fosters a caring environment in the school.

Crucial to establishing the screening meeting, and, in fact, most of the programs I've presented in this paper, is the support of the building principal. The principal is the educational leader of the school. This position has always been the key to the environment in the building. Recent educational reform legislation in some states has enhanced this role even further. As site-based management and decentralized decision-making are increasingly becoming the prevailing philosophies in many school systems, the principal's attitude becomes even more significant. Hopefully, the principal will be enthusiastic about the usefulness of the screening meeting, and about the school adjustment counselor who brings staff together in trying to find creative ways to help the students. It is very important for the school adjustment counselor to build a relationship with the principal of the school. The principal will probably appreciate and rely on the support of the school adjustment counselor in making the school more responsive to students.

Several decisions need to be made if a school wants to establish a screening meeting. There needs to be someone in charge on a regular basis. The leader can be an administrator, a guidance counselor, a teacher, etc. The key is the organizational style of the leader. In my school, the director of guidance is the chairman. The meeting works very well because he is a task-oriented person. He sets the time, the agenda, sends out the

meeting notices, and works diligently to keep everyone on schedule during the meeting. We have the meeting at the same time every other week which strengthens its being a "regular" part of the school. Meeting participants include the guidance counselors, school adjustment counselor, school psychologist, nurse, vice principal, learning disabilities resource teacher. We also include any other support personnel who are part of our service at the time. For example, we have a peer resource team in our building. The supervisor of that program attends. We have a counselor from the substance abuse agency who is in the building two days a week. That person also attends the meetings. I believe classroom teachers who wish to give or receive input on a particular student should be included in this meeting. It is important to build this into the blueprint at the outset of planning to establish a screening meeting component because the necessity to provide classroom coverage makes this component more difficult to realize. The presence of classroom teachers, however, is a component too essential to neglect. In fact, the presence of a building administrator and the classroom teachers are the components which are essential if one of the goals is not simply to "fix" students, but to enhance the school community.

There needs to be discussion of confidentiality at the outset and a brief training as to appropriate material to include and exclude in discussing students. One or more of

the support personnel are usually the most obvious people to do this training, although the leader has flexibility in making this decision. Flexibility, on the one hand, and a directive, organized manner on the other hand are key characteristics of the leader. Confidentiality is always an issue, as it is in all provision of mental health services and must be handled with great sensitivity. In the training the staff needs to learn the way to present enough information to be helpful, but not so much as to be damaging to the student—a difficult task!

The leader asks the person who referred the student to the screening meeting to talk for about five to ten minutes about the student (age, grade, ability, some family background) and, most importantly, communicate his concerns and questions. Other staff members add comments when appropriate. For example, the nurse might have some pertinent medical information; the vice principal would inform the group about school rule infractions if there are any.

The group then discusses what might be done to improve the situation. Sometimes a home visit is decided upon to bridge the gap between school and home and/or to gain more information. Sometimes the group decides that the student would benefit from counseling or referral to an agency (such as Berkshire Council on Alcoholism). Sometimes, however, the decision is to consider the school's approach. Is there some way in which our handling of the student

doesn't blend with the needs of the student? Are there
things we can do in the school to help that student to feel
better about himself? Are there ways that we can frame a
situation which looks negative in a more positive light?
For example, a student who may be frequently late for
school may be not a "discipline problem," but a very caring
member of his family who is, in reality, the parent figure
in that family. Perhaps we can offer support to help put
the student in a more appropriate role (to be age fifteen
instead of thirty, for example). Possibly, all of these
efforts will fail because the family's homeostasis is far
more powerful than any of our efforts. It could be that
the ultimate decision of the screening meeting team will be
to alter the environment of the school (i.e., change the
student's schedule, or talk to all the teachers about the
situation, or work with the vice principal to develop a
plan which commits the student to certain responsibilities
and at the same time, make some changes to help the student
function in the school.

A key to a well-functioning screening meeting is a
vehicle for reporting back after an established period of
time. There are some pitfalls which can damage the
effectiveness of the meeting. For one, the leader needs to
be alert that the meeting does not deteriorate into a
gossip session, with everyone telling every detail they
ever knew about this child and family. The group needs to
be careful not to quickly assess blame.

I have found the training in systemic family therapy, which all of the school adjustment counselors and school psychologists in the Pittsfield Public Schools have received for the last twelve years on an ongoing basis from the University of Massachusetts family therapy program, to be extremely helpful in this regard. The technique of reframing, for example, can be used very effectively at the screening meeting. I have found that the language used, for example, in reframing a student's school tardiness as caretaking of his/her family often impacts the thinking of the members present at the screening meeting and somehow opens up the discussion to more creative ways of helping the student within the school setting.

A major pitfall, I believe, is to heighten expectations of staff that there will be a plan established for each student whom they refer to the screening meeting, and to follow through on the development of that plan. Perhaps even more significant is the matter of communication. If a teacher makes a referral to the screening meeting, then it is excellent if the teacher is able to attend the meeting. If it is not possible for the teacher to attend the meeting, it is crucial for the teacher, or whoever made the referral, to receive information as to the plan established for the student. If that does not happen, teachers lose confidence in the process and the screening meeting is seriously weakened as a vehicle for helping students. When handled properly, the

screening meeting is a very effective avenue for fostering communication among the staff in a school, and ultimately, meeting students' needs more effectively.

Classroom Meetings. The staff at my high school and in the middle school in which I worked previously are very responsive to my conducting classroom meetings with teachers. Classroom meetings are particularly useful for classroom management problems or in a classroom where there are some students who are very shy, have particular learning or medical problems, or exhibit difficult behavior.

I use approaches which I adapted from William Glasser. In his book, Schools Without Failure, he suggests use of the classroom meeting technique as a behavior management tool in the classroom. (Glasser, 1968.) I found that this same classroom meeting has very wide applicability in the classroom. It can be adapted for all kinds of uses. Most significant, I believe, is establishing a climate in which teachers feel comfortable asking for the help. The tone must not be one which diminishes teacher's self-esteem. I believe in the approach I talked about earlier in this paper, that we're all in this together during this difficult time in education where we are dealing with drastically reduced budgets, increasing numbers of children with severe emotional difficulties, and more pressure to prepare our students for the technology demands of the 90's and beyond.

When a teacher talks about difficulty with a student or class, if the time and other situations seem appropriate, I suggest that I could try coming into the classroom to conduct a classroom meeting. I do not present myself as the expert on this subject, nor do I make promises of any great results. Once again, it is the approach to staff, and the belief system which underlies that approach, which I consider to be the crucial factor. I respect teachers who invite me into their classroom. They are risk-takers. Their jobs are getting more and more complicated.

I begin the meeting by telling the students something about me, what a school adjustment counselor is, how I might be of assistance to them or to their friends if they feel the need, and specifically how to get to see me. I have learned that it is extremely important to be specific about details such as this. Concrete information, just as clearly stated rules, decreases uncertainty, and therefore, stress, for students, staff, and parents, in fact, all people who interact with me. I thank the teacher profusely for allowing an outsider in to the classroom to talk about classroom issues. I want the students to appreciate that this is a sign of great commitment on the part of the teacher, to care enough to risk having an outsider into the classroom. A key for me is to enhance the teacher's power in the classroom, not diminish it by my presence.

I use a non-threatening, ice-breaking activity as a vehicle to connect to each student in the classroom. One which I find particularly effective is organizing the classroom into dyads, having the students talk for a couple of minutes to each other. Then each person introduces his partner in the dyad to the class, telling some small piece of information about him/her, such as his/her favorite subject or something he/she likes to do after school. It always seems easier for students to talk about someone else than about themselves. I'm not sure why this is so. I do think our culture has not generally encouraged people talking about themselves. For too long, talking about oneself was considered bragging, so people tend to shy away from self-disclosure. I think, too, that many people do think of others before they think of themselves, perhaps partly because of their innate caring, and partly because our society applauds this virtue but does not applaud concern for oneself. The activity allows me to make direct contact with each student in the classroom and provides me with the opportunity to comment on how complex people are; these students think they know everything there is to know about one another, and yet, for example, they just learned that Joe Smith loves to watch programs about archeology.

After completing this ice-breaking activity, I begin to talk about the problem that preceded my being invited to visit with the class. I often find that I have been able to begin to address some aspect of the issue during the

144

ice-breaking activity. For example, if the focus of my
being invited to do a classroom meeting is an acting-out
student, during the ice-breaker we may have talked about
self-esteem and how people behave when they have poor
self-esteem. It is helpful if there is a chance to deal
with the acting-out student or students in a positive way
before talking about the problem It unbalances his usual
role of troublemaker. Humor helps immeasurably.

We talk about the problem and some possible solutions.
I thank the teacher once again, and also the students,
for welcoming me into the classroom. I offer to visit
again if they so desire. I suggest that change takes time,
and predict that difficulties are probably not over,
techniques learned from strategic family therapy. These
statements have the advantage of helping the students to
realize that change is a process and keeps them from being
disappointed in the acting-out student and themselves.

As in many of the other activities I've talked about,
the key is the approach, the tone. I try to highlight the
positive; to support and respect the teacher; and to see
the good in all of the students. I find this attitude is
catching, and is often caught rather quickly by other
staff and students.

In-Depth Work With Teachers: A Prevention Project. I
have been fortunate to be in a school system which respects
school adjustment counseling, to have a supervisor who
believes in a systemic approach and to have a Health

Coordinator who believes in primary prevention as a major aspect of Comprehensive Health Education. As a result of their far-sighted point of view, I have for the last two years had an opportunity to dramatically expand my interest in working with teachers as a central focus of the school adjustment counselor's job.

I had for a long time been speaking about beleaguered teachers, dealing simultaneously with growing numbers of students in their classrooms with increasingly complex problems, increasingly strident criticisms that the students are not adequately prepared for the complex technological world, and decreasing community support for teachers. Primarily as a result of successes with classroom meetings which I discussed earlier, I had come to believe that we needed to do more work in our classrooms to support the teachers and to deal with the reality that there is no way that all of the students needing counseling support could possibly receive that help. The numbers are simply too great to provide everyone with appropriate services. Then, too, I believe so fervently in the systemic approach that I was not concerned that removing students from the classroom was always the best way to really help them. That is not to say that I do not believe students should ever be removed from the classroom for individual or group counseling. There are students who definitely benefit from counseling. The situations of their lives are such that they need the therapeutic

relationship, and often make excellent progress in coping with their lives so that they may then focus on more typical activities of childhood and adolescence, such as the accumulation of skills and knowledge.

But for these students, as well as many others in the classroom, establishing a comfortable classroom environment can be very beneficial. It also creates an atmosphere which can be most helpful for the teacher who is coping with so many conflicting demands and expectations. The classroom meetings which I had facilitated for the purpose of working through specific classroom problems had received a very favorable response from teachers. They seemed very enthusiastic about the possibilities of these meetings to improve the atmosphere in their classrooms.

When I began the new job, I decided that my first task was to advertise my availability. I met with groups of building principals at each of the school levels—elementary, middle and secondary—to discuss the background and philosophy of the position as I saw it and to elicit their input as to how I could be most helpful to the teachers in their schools. I told them I had only two rules to which I adhered: (1) I go only where I'm invited and (2) I do not supplement the services of school adjustment counselors already assigned to the building in working with individuals or small groups of students. Actually I established a third rule, but it is one not always stated directly. I do not function as a

"specialist" teacher. In our school system teachers have a
free period and leave the room when students meet with
specialists such as music teachers. It has been crucial to
me that the teacher be in the room, participating in the
activities and hopefully taking over and continuing the
meetings long after I'm gone. Sometimes it takes much
effort and tact to get this to happen, although most
teachers are delighted to have the help. I encouraged the
principals to invite me to faculty meetings or to meet with
small groups of teachers in their schools. One principal
invited me to do a workshop for his staff on my classroom
work. That was very successful. Twelve out of twenty-four
teachers in that school invited me into their classrooms.
In some cases I've connected to the teachers through the
school adjustment counselor in that building. It has, as
always, been important to be very flexible and go with the
interests and style of the building. In our community, our
school system is arranged so that there is a great deal of
building-based autonomy. There is, therefore, no one
correct way to get access to all of the teachers. A
system-imposed program would not work anyway. As I've
stated so many times throughout this handbook, I believe
that programs must evolve naturally from the
environment-the classroom, the school, the community.

     Once I get to meet with teachers, either in entire
faculty meetings or in small groups, I tell them about my
new job. My job has been designed, I tell them, with

appreciation for the difficult task our teachers have in these current times. I tell them that I am still a school adjustment counselor, but that I am now focusing on how I can be helpful to them, the classroom teacher. I had some concerns that there might be resistance to this notion, with some feeling on their parts that they did not want to be clients. However, I was probably not giving teachers enough credit. They seem to understand the prevention philosophy which is the underpinning of my approach and they are very appreciative of the extra support. They seem empowered by the school system's recognition that their jobs are increasingly difficult. I offer several possibilities as to how I might be helpful. I tell them that I can provide workshops on various topics such as childhood and adolescent depression, that I can provide personal and professional support to them by providing staff support groups, and that I can work with them in their classrooms to enhance the classroom as a learning environment.

There has been some interest in the staff support groups. As of this writing, two additional groups have begun, one at an elementary school and one at a middle school, in addition to the ongoing group at a high school which has existed for many years. But the greatest interest in using my services has been in working with teachers in their classrooms.

Typically, after receiving an invitation from a teacher, I meet with the teacher to listen, to hear the teacher talk about his classroom. I learn what he is proud of and what the concerns are. I also have the opportunity to talk with the teacher, to share ideas as to what might work in this classroom. I hope to set the tone that we are "in this together." I do not like to come in as the "expert." The goal is to help the teacher. Listening to him, hearing his concerns, what he's tried, if it worked, is very validating to his self-esteem. The crucial point for me, once again, is that I believe this. I believe that most teachers care greatly about their students and about their classroom environment. There is not one absolutely correct way to run an effective classroom. My work needs to be complementary to the way the teacher has the classroom organized. I try to never do anything in the classroom which is contrary to the teacher's comfort level. For example, I always ask the teacher if he is comfortable with moving desks in various configurations. Teachers have different reasons for keeping desks in one or another order. They know their classroom. It is not my place to come in and change everything. This approach would be a guarantee that my efforts would fail. Earlier in this handbook, I used the term "joining" , borrowed from the language of family therapy. This approach to teachers is clearly "joining." The goal is to "go with the flow" of the teacher in intervening in the classroom so that the

teacher feels empowered, has his self-esteem enhanced, not diminished, and he hopefully will feel comfortable enough to adopt some of the approaches I've used in the classroom if he feels they are effective.

Typically I meet with the students in the classroom at least twice for the initial activities. Sometimes the initial sessions take three meetings, depending upon the size of the class, the discussions which surface, the attention span of the group.

I always begin by introducing myself, after the teacher does the initial introduction, and telling the students that for many years I was a school adjustment counselor, similar to the counselor who works in their building. I tell them that I have become interested in the possibilities of making the classrooms as positive places for people as they can be. I tell them that we cannot attempt to solve all the problems in the world, but for thirty hours a week we are together in this classroom and I am convinced that there are ways we can help one another in this classroom. It is important, I believe, to clearly define our territory as this classroom, and to spend some time reinforcing this. There is a tendency on the part of the children to bring all the issues of their lives into these discussions. I have found that clearly establishing our target areas as the classroom helps the process. It is one more way of defining clear limits.

I tell the students we will do an activity so that I can get to know a little about them and that we will then have a classroom discussion about what the problems in this classroom may be. I put up a list of rules for classroom discussions and spend a fair amount of time going over each rule. I find that being very clear about the rules makes students feel safe. For example, I spend about ten or fifteen minutes talking about listening. I ask them how many people have had the experience of talking and feeling people weren't listening to them. I ask them how that felt. I ask them how they know if people are listening to them. I ask them if anyone can make them listen. There are many possibilities for further discussing listening skills. I have found that students from kindergarten through eighth grade have been equally interested in this discussion. This discussion about listening and clearly establishing the rules is, I believe, the key to an effective classroom meeting. I leave the list of rules with the teachers and encourage them to review the rules each time they decide to have a meeting. It is possible to make up one's own list of rules, or distribute ones which are found in any of the prepared materials which are available for running classroom discussions. I use a list which I found a long time ago. I do not recall the source, but the rules are:

1. Everyone gets a chance to speak.
2. Focus on the speaker, not your own thoughts.

3. Everyone waits his/her turn.

4. Each person listens while others are speaking.

5. Do not interrupt.

6. Do not do or say anything to put one another down.

Going over the rules sets the framework for the meeting. It is helpful to spend a few minutes discussing each of the rules. I ask students if any of the rules are particularly difficult for them, an opportunity for me to encourage each student to think about his own behavior. This is an important teaching piece. Ultimately, much of this work about prevention deals with students' own responsibility for their behavior, their ability to make many choices about their lives. They are encouraged to feel they have choices in their lives. My sense is that this may decrease the victim mentality which pervades too many of our students in the schools. It also takes pressure off our teachers. We want students to understand the teachers don't "make them" do or not do things, that listening, respecting others, cooperation, all come from within themselves. They have choices about their own behaviors and attitudes.

With this framework in place, we then can discuss whatever evolves from the teacher or from any of the students. Sometimes we brainstorm what the students see as problems in this classroom and choose a problem on which we will work. In some classes the students set up a behavior

modification program to meet the behavior goal. They vote on which behavior on their list is going to be their target. They set up a chart and a rewards system. In some classrooms the discussion itself is the way the goal is pursued. Again, a great deal depends upon the teacher. I take my lead from the teacher, continuously involving the teacher in the process and in the discussion. I cannot emphasize too strongly the significance of joining with the teacher, of assessing the teacher's comfort level, in doing any work in the classroom. The school adjustment counselor who visits the classroom is, after all, only there on a time-limited basis. If the classroom teacher feels comfortable with the process and technique of the classroom meeting, all of the goals of the intervention are possible. First of all, the teacher is supported by students taking more responsibility for their own behaviors and for the classroom functioning, and ultimately the classroom becomes a more comfortable environment for all the students, enhancing the climate for learning. This is the essence of what schools are supposed to be about. There are almost limitless possibilities of topics to be discussed and approaches to be used in running classroom meetings. The absolute key to the usefulness of this process is the teacher viewing the classroom meeting as a positive activity for his classroom. He will not view it that way if the meeting is not compatible with his teaching style. I believe the meeting can be successfully adapted

to many teaching styles. It is crucial for the person modeling the technique to help the teacher feel ownership of the process. We will still not have a 100% success rate in getting teachers to use the classroom meeting regularly, but the percentages will surely increase and lines of communication will have opened up.

The classrooms and teachers which have most successfully integrated the meeting into their regular activities have generally been ones which I have continued to revisit. In some of the schools I meet regularly with teaching teams or individual teachers to listen to the teachers, to hear their concerns and to talk about their classroom meetings. Some concepts which we, as counselors, take for granted take time for the teachers to learn. Meeting with them to hear about their experiences has been valuable in helping them to truly "own" the process. I had an example of this very recently. At a meeting with a fifth grade teaching team, a teacher said that she didn't think the classroom meeting had been successful because the students were "worse than usual" at recess the days they had the meeting. I supported her and told her that often when difficult topics are discussed, some students are, at first, extremely uncomfortable and may act out. I also encouraged her to schedule another meeting and bring up her concerns about the students' behavior to the class. I suggested that the process of their being involved in the problem and possible solutions would be a good use of the

classroom meeting. They would have to listen, to use shared decision-making, and to take responsibility for their own behaviors. An important result, I hoped, would be a real opportunity for empowerment of the students. To use the jargon of our counseling profession, I encouraged the teacher to "trust the process." I have learned in these two years I need to be more concrete when I talk to teachers. I need to explain what I mean by the process. We counselors have been trained to understand the term "process" as opposed to "content," but that does not seem to be true of teachers' preparation. The teacher did discuss this at her next classroom meeting. She is currently very enthusiastic about the results, she talks about the process of empowerment and is a wonderful advocate. Just yesterday she told me that the classroom meetings have been an important factor in her not feeling burned out, although she has the neediest group of students she's had in nineteen years of teaching.

Clearly this aspect of the school adjustment counselor's work, working with teachers, has much growth potential. I see it as a key aspect of a prevention philosophy of school adjustment counseling. I believe we will continue to learn and to look for new ways to help teachers in their classrooms.

<u>Activities For Parents</u>

I've said earlier in this paper that I would find it difficult to have to make a choice between working with students and working with staff as the most important task of the school adjustment counselor. Although not as easily accessible, I believe working with parents is the third point of the triangle which must be considered in a school which sees itself as an effective place to help students prepare for the world they will encounter.

<u>Home Visits</u>. It seems clear that it is essential to have contact with a student's family if the school adjustment counselor is to have maximum impact. That contact takes many forms. An original task of the school adjustment counselor was to be a liaison between home and school. In fact, some school systems called the person in this position the school-home visitor. For many families, the physical institution of the school is scary; people often recall their own school experiences which may have been unhappy ones. Visiting families on their own turf may be much more comfortable for some. It makes the school seem much more real, much less overwhelming. In my early years as a school adjustment counselor, I was intrigued by how much information I learned about a student's life by making a home visit. Who is in the family, what are family values, its socio-economic situation? All of these are easier to assess in the home setting (although one needs to be somewhat cautious about instant judgments). The value

of home visits is certainly not a new concept. Thirty years ago, in my first year of teaching history in Williamstown, Massachusetts, we were encouraged to make some home visits for students in our classroom. I remember the department head saying that he was required to make home visits when he began as a teacher in the late 1940's, and that it had been an education to see that some students had no clear surface in their homes on which to do written homework.

With home visits, as with virtually every other activity I've written about in this paper, the key factor is the tone of the school personnel making the visit. It is natural that the family will feel threatened when anticipating the visit. When I make the initial call to the family, I try to decrease their anxiety by suggesting that we both want to help their child, that maybe by "putting our heads together" we can figure out some ways to be helpful. When I suggest my coming to the house, I always leave an alternative of their seeing me at school, believing that the student will not ultimately be helped if the family feels uncomfortable having someone from the school visit. In all situations, it seems to me people's self-esteem is enhanced when they believe they have options, and diminished when they feel powerless to make choices.

Family Meetings. Another technique which I have found very helpful is the family meeting. Although I and my

colleagues in the school system's mental health department are all trained in systemic family therapy, I have never called our family interventions therapy sessions. The term 'family meeting' is much less emotionally charged, and is much more congruent with the school setting. It has always intrigued me how many families I've worked with over the years were unequivocally opposed to family therapy but were very willing to have regularly scheduled family meetings in the school. When a student is having some kind of difficulty, I almost always encourage a family meeting. If possible, and the student is willing, I like to invite at least one classroom teacher (usually of the student's choosing) and the guidance counselor to participate in the meeting. Sometimes I can't convince the student that it will be helpful to have all these people at our meeting, so we start with a smaller group. I work with whomever I can get, hoping we can establish an atmosphere that decreases the we-they syndrome (whether we-they be the family vs. the school or the student vs. the parent).

Once again, as with all the programs I've already written about, I try to use the vehicle of the school, and the normalcy of that, to anchor the discussion. I operate, as I always try to do, from the premise that we all want what is best for the student. We may have different ideas about what is best, but I try to highlight our commonalities, not our differences. I try to steer the discussion away from blaming one another and look for

the strengths, of the student, the family and the school.
I try to find some concrete areas of agreement and some
specific short-term goal, no matter how small it seems,
by the end of the session. Often we agree to meet again.
I don't preplan additional meetings but let that notion
evolve from the meeting. These meetings have been very
useful to de-escalating tensions between home and school
and within families. I've been using this technique more
frequently in recent years to de-escalate tensions between
student and teacher also. There is something very
effective about all the parties to an issue sitting down
together. The process itself can be extremely positive in
enhancing the situation for the student.

Parent Education. I hesitated for some years to get
the school very involved in primary prevention activities
for parents; listening to the critics who were saying that
"the school can't do it all;" that it needs to be left to
other institutions to help with the very complex issues of
parenting. However, I've recently experimented with some
parent education activities, since there has been a great
deal of feeling that the school has the advantage of
including the entire spectrum of students and that the
school seems to be one of the only institutions which still
reaches most people, if often only minimally.

In 1988, the high school principal and the director of
guidance were both most anxious to experiment with some
parent education. They were feeling extremely frustrated

with increasingly greater numbers of students exhibiting severe problems and wanting to do something constructive. They were well aware that current thinking says that parents won't attend general meetings at the high school level; that the only chance of reaching them is for meetings or performances which specifically involve their own children.

We met and decided to experiment. I read several programs which are available for purchase, then decided to follow my usual procedure of helping programs to evolve, from the bottom up, as it were. The principal and I met with the school's parent advisory council made up of twenty-five interested parents. I told them that we were thinking of doing some kind of parent education but had no specific plan in mind. They were totally in favor of trying, but, like us, were very unsure that parents would support the concept, particularly at a fairly large city high school. I asked the group to do brainstorming, with the chairman of the group leading it, to prepare a list of topics that would be of interest to them. They came up with a long list which I later used in organizing the series. I asked their input as to organizational details such as number of sessions, season of the year, time of each session, grade levels we should invite, etc. Their list seemed to break down into four broad topics, so I planned four sessions covering these areas. I designed a

brief letter to the parents of 8th graders (at the middle schools) through 11th graders, as the group had suggested.

It is interesting that in receiving feedback when the sessions were completed, many people commented that the letter was a major factor in motivating them to sign up for the series. Its opening sentence was "These are difficult times. There are really no experts on parenting teens in the 80's and 90's. Perhaps we can help one another." People told me they did not sense that signing up would mean they were inadequate parents. We received 121 positive responses. When the dates were finalized, we had 92 people in the series. The smallest attendance, on a Monday following Memorial Day weekend, was 56. Even when the sessions went into June, we had 64 people at the session. There was a great deal of interest in maintaining the series on an ongoing basis as a support group. Some wanted to have the series again the following year. I have maintained the four session educational series, although I believe it would have been helpful to offer an ongoing support group too, particularly since it emanated from parents' requests.

As you can see from the enclosed letter, the series focuses on communication. My general philosophy about parenting issues can be stated very simply. Parenting, especially adolescents, is a difficult job. It probably always was, but the particular context of the times makes it even more difficult because (1) we are living in a time

of social revolution. I believe my generation had more similarity in social mores with my parents' generation, even though a world war and a major depression had been overriding backdrops in their lives than I do with my children's generation. (2) The traditional pattern of a family consisting of two parents, mother at home and father working, is now the life style for the minority, not the majority of people. (3) Children have so many more choices than they had a generation ago and very different institutions impacting their decision-making than their parents did. For example, the church exerted much more influence on the behaviors of the parents' and grandparents' generations. The media and current music have much more sway in young peoples' lives today. Many students develop their values from watching the TV talk show. Talk show hosts such as Oprah Winfrey and Sally Jessy Raphael function often as parents and ministers, inculcating the new values to our students. I am not prepared within the context of this paper to discuss the positives and negatives of this reality. It is clearly just exceedingly different and tending to enlarge the schism which separates the generations.

Helping parents to understand the context of their children's lives does, I believe, help to improve communication. I plan to try a new activity in the parent series I'm currently offering. Just as parents need to establish a comfortable atmosphere in their homes which

enhances communication, students need to be helped to understand the context of their parents' lives. I have found that students need to feel safety and acceptance before they are ready to hear messages that differ from the ones they generally hear. During counseling groups in school, students are sometimes ready to hear that parents are people, have problems, feelings, needs, goals, just as teens have. This awareness can be a powerful tool in improving communication within the family. At the last of the regularly scheduled sessions, I shall invite students to attend with their parents. Small group sessions will be set up, with some teens and some adults in each group. I've received input from students that at the first session, families should be separated, encouraging students' interaction with adults other than their parents. There will be discussion on topics concerning contemporary adolescent issues. Ice-breaking activities will hopefully allow adults to share some memories of adolescence with the students. Actually this idea evolved from a series of classroom meetings in which I participated last year during a senior contemporary issues course. A group of administrators, teachers, school committee members and counselors talked with the students about issues of concern to them (i.e., sexuality concerns, AIDS, the economy and how it might impact their futures). Students admitted that most of them rarely had discussions like this with their parents or any other adults. They seemed excited about the

opportunity to participate in a dialogue and thought other students would welcome this same opportunity. Perhaps an ongoing parents and teens discussion group will evolve from this beginning.

I have found that establishing as comfortable an atmosphere as possible is very significant to successful parent education programs. Parents experience both positive and negative feelings when they attend parenting sessions in the school setting. On the one hand, some parents whose children may be having difficulties are often willing to attend family meetings in school, while they might resist participating in family therapy in a non-school setting. These parents feel comfortable coming to school because it is a "normal" thing to do. On the other hand, some parents, depending upon their own life experiences, feel awkward or insecure in the school setting. They may have concerns that by attending a series on parenting, they are admitting that they are inadequate parents or may feel they are being viewed that way by school staff. Physical space is a factor in establishing a welcoming atmosphere. I try to choose the most comfortable room in the school, depending upon size and availability. Carpeting and upholstered furniture help, although I know these are not always available. I like to have refreshments available when people arrive and I circulate among the group to greet everyone informally before the formal presentation begins. This has worked very well for

me as a way to help people feel comfortable. The same statement that I made earlier about teens needing to feel safe and accepted before they are ready to hear messages that may be different from the prevailing notions, pertains to adults. As with virtually all of the other activities we've talked about, I believe a comfort level is the key. People need to feel safe, not judged. Providing a welcoming atmosphere establishes a setting in which parents are ready to receive information and share experiences.

In addition to running ongoing parent education workshops and seminars, the school adjustment counselor has many invitations to speak to groups of parents at community forums and in the various media. I have frequently been interviewed for local radio stations, for local (and sometimes network) TV stations and to comment on issues of significance to parents quite regularly in the local newspapers.

These many requests cause me to reflect once again on the unique role of the school adjustment counselor in the community. People, I believe, are desperately looking for ways to cope with the complexity of our contemporary society. The schools have had a singular role in everyone's life, so it seems natural for them to turn to the school as a place to help them find the answers. Because so many of the questions of our era are in the realm of emotional and social issues, the school adjustment counselor as the school staff member most closely

identified with these areas becomes the resource to the community. It sometimes seems an awesome responsibility, but at the same time is a very exciting challenge.

Activities for the School Community

As the times have dramatically changed, so too has the job of the school adjustment counselor, certainly since the time I was hired, over twenty years ago. When the position has credibility in a school, that person can function as a change agent; often as part of a team developing new programs in the schools, and as a coordinator of agencies coming into the school.

For example, for several years I was concerned that the students I was seeing received very little information regarding human sexuality. They were told to make "correct" decisions regarding substance abuse and their sexuality, but were not helped to know how to do this. I saw part of my role as school adjustment counselor to advocate first with school personnel, then with the general community to add to the curriculum. I shall discuss the results of this advocacy more fully when dealing with coalition-building in the larger community.

Currently, the concern in Pittsfield High School, as in our entire school system, is to work on school improvement in a climate where there are major budget constraints. An additional component, and one which involves me in a major way, is that our community is in an

unusually stressful time due to hundreds of layoffs at the General Electric Company, our major employer. We have a very pro-active principal who is determined to find new ways to provide the best quality education for our students. He is very interested in aesthetics as a way to improve quality of life. Recently he had a fountain with constantly running water surrounded by flowering shrubs installed in the central lobby of our building. He shares my feelings that mental health concerns must be woven into the fabric of the school. As a result, I have been limited only by my own creativity and energy level as to the role of the school adjustment counselor in the total school environment.

Currently he has been conducting brainstorming sessions with staff to help us develop "workable wish lists" to help him write grant proposals to foundations. Concerns in the realm of the school adjustment counselor have been one of the primary focus areas.

We have just received a grant to coordinate theater classes and the peer resource team members to perform improvisations on various teenage social issues, to video tape these improvisations, and to use the tapes as springboards for discussions in group counseling, in human development classes, and wherever else their use seems appropriate.

Our high school is involved in the early stages of a partnership with General Electric Plastics. In the early

stages of this partnership, there were several meetings with GE executives and school personnel as to how to best use this partnership. I was a part of those deliberations to bring my particular perspective.

At one of those meetings, one of the General Electric personnel mentioned that GE was involved in mentoring programs in various communities around the country. I had been talking to school staff about my desire to develop a mentoring program at the school. I had become increasingly convinced that large numbers of our students would benefit dramatically by having time with a caring adult, but was not sure how to start such a program.

A series of meetings ensued between a small core of GE staff and the guidance director, an interested teacher and myself. The program is currently in its third year. There are about 50 matches. There were some growing pains as we developed the program, but it is now working very effectively. There was an attitude on the part of everyone involved that we wanted this to work. We were all flexible and open. I am no longer as actively involved as I was at the outset. My primary involvement is to recommend students who could be appropriate "mentees," to do part of the training for GE mentors and to generally support the program. The teacher who is the school liaison and the GE staff person who selects the GE personnel and makes the matches between the mentor and mentee are the keys to the successful operation of the program. I see my role, the

school adjustment counselor's role, as having functioned as the catalyst in developing this mentor program. I saw the need, I articulated it and advocated for the program; then supported it as it has evolved. This approach speaks once again to my philosophy of a systemic role for the school adjustment counselor-being present at partnership meetings, for example-and therefore, being in a position to advocate for and develop such programs as the needs evolve.

Over the years I have been involved in the larger school community in a variety of ways. Among these are the following:

From the many materials and speakers which come to my attention, I frequently make suggestions to the principal as to assemblies and related activities which will enhance the mental health climate of the school.

I suggest topics for articles in the school newspaper and agree, when appropriate, to being interviewed for those articles.

We have had a TV monitor in the main lobby of our school. I suggested slogans and ideas to be included on the screen, such as "Caring about your friends is telling someone in the school or general community if your friend is talking about hurting himself."

I try to be present at plays, concerts, games. I believe there is a very positive message in having the

mental health personnel as a very visible and "regular" part of the school community.

It would be impossible to anticipate all the possibilities and ideas to enhance the school climate. Situations will differ from one school to another. If the school adjustment counselor has ongoing good communication with school staff, needs will become apparent. For example, several years ago the vice principals and some teachers commented that they knew several students who did not go to lunch because they seemed to be "loners" and had no one to sit with. I investigated further and found that six or seven students would "hide" at lunch, seemingly trying to fade into the background. With the principal's help, we found a small empty room, recruited some community volunteers, convinced a service club to give us a small amount of money to buy some games, etc., and began a noon hour drop-in center. Staff members who were likely to know the students, such as vice principals, guidance counselors, resource room teachers, nurse, were told about the center and asked to recruit students. The students became their own peer group.

The particular activities will change from school to school and in different times. What is more significant, I think, is the responsiveness and involvement level of the school adjustment counselor. If the counselor is actively involved in the everyday activities of the school, has his antenna extended, and has an attitude that shows

willingness to try new ways to meet the emotional needs of the students, programs will naturally evolve.

Activities For the General Community

It is almost impossible to read a newspaper in 1990 and not find at least one article about our students' lack of preparedness for the twenty-first century, about drug abuse, family divorce, teenage pregnancy, teen suicide, or family communication.

As a result, the school adjustment counselor, who works in the schools, and who is involved with the students' emotional needs, is in a position where everyone in the community is willing to use this person as a resource. I look upon this as an opportunity and responsibility, not as a burden. In the years I have been in this position, I've seen this phenomenon grow continuously.

Coalition is a popular term of our times, particularly when applying for public and private grant money. The school is a perfect place from which to launch a coalition effort because it involves so much of the community, is not identified clearly with any one particular group, and on a more subliminal level, has emotional appeal for so many people, to be involved with schools. The counselor understands the needs of the students. If he/she combines this with the ability to articulate those needs to

interested members of the community, an ideal situation for coalition-building exists.

In Pittsfield, I used this coalition-building technique to finally address the lack of comprehensive and compulsory health education in the school system. A prevailing and widely accepted notion in Pittsfield for all of my years in the school system was that the community would never accept comprehensive education regarding sexual issues. I was becoming increasingly concerned about the messages our students were and are receiving from the other institutions which impact them: the media, their music, advertising, their peers. There were also members of the clergy who were concerned about the messages students were receiving. I went to speak with the Berkshire Clergy Association and the Council of Churches about my concern that by not providing comprehensive health education, we were unwittingly supporting the notion that "everybody is doing it." I shared my view that we should capitalize on the reality that our students have so many choices. I hoped we could let them understand that these choices gave them the opportunity to make decisions; that although decision-making is difficult, making decisions for oneself builds self-esteem. I was anxious to develop the notion that although the times are difficult, you can choose not to be a victim by the choices you choose to make. One minister agreed to be co-chairman of the group I was trying to organize, which was a wonderful bonus.

We brainstormed as to who we should contact to be involved. We decided to involve everyone who wished to be involved and to actively solicit supposedly adversarial groups in the community (i.e., Family Planning Council and Right to Life). We felt that for a coalition to be successful, every conflicting viewpoint needed to be represented, and respected. We were not experts on coalition-building. What we all shared was a sincere commitment to have our children hear a different message than the one they were receiving by our failure to provide health education. We also realized if we left out any group with an interest, positive or negative, the effort could be easily sabotaged. For example, we visited the President of the Right to Life organization, told her what we were trying to do, and asked her group to be included in the task force. She seemed very surprised, and said it was unusual for groups interested in getting sex education into the schools to include Right to Life. I told her that Right to Life represented a significant segment of our community; that although our views certainly did not always coincide, I respected their sincerity in their point of view and I believed that we all shared a desire to help our students as much as we possibly could with the challenges which they faced.

The process was slow. It took three months to contact all of the people that we decided should be involved. There were parents, agencies, clergy, and school personnel.

No group we contacted refused to participate. We widely
disseminated information about our concerns, not wishing to
exclude anyone who had an interest. The final group
numbered forty-five. We spent a great deal of time
planning our first meeting, even to debating the physical
makeup of the room. We decided to have a large square
table so that there would be no pyramid structure, and so
that everyone could see each other. I also believe people
feel safer seated behind a table, than without one.
Safety was particularly important at the first meeting when
people would naturally feel somewhat unsure of the
situation. The Superintendent of Schools presented the
charge to the group at the first meeting, then left us to
establish our own goals and timetable. We used the first
several meetings to get to know one another; named
ourselves the Human Development Task Force; continuously
worked on respecting one another's opinions and focusing on
our commonalities. After several meetings, we decided to
submit an article about our existence to the newspaper,
specifically to be sure we were not unintentionally
excluding someone who wished to be a part of our
deliberations. Some members were concerned that we might
receive negative publicity because they thought the
community would be most unhappy about our efforts.
Actually, I was anxious to find out if there were pockets
of strong opposition in the community. In early community
organization efforts, I had usually found that it was

advantageous to get the resistance out early in the process
of developing new projects. Otherwise, it can be very
frustrating to announce a completed proposal only to have
it destroyed by the opposition. Collaborative efforts can
often diffuse opposition. In reality, we received only two
responses to one newspaper article, one from a parent
wishing to be included, and one from the local Public
Health Commissioner commending our existence and asking to
be included in the group.

    We met for eighteen months, usually twice a month.
The group even met through the summer. When we finally
went to the School Committee on a freezing January night in
1987 with a proposal to establish comprehensive health
education in the Pittsfield Public Schools, Grades K-10 as
a requirement for graduation, the proposal was passed
unanimously. Many long-time school observers were
surprised at our reception.

    In rethinking the coalition efforts, I observed that
the key elements were inclusiveness, mutual respect, and
the centrality of the schools as convenor. The sincerity
of everyone's desire to help our students was respected,
and everyone's views were listened to. Of course, the
times and concerns about AIDS helped us, too.

    I have discussed this coalition in such great detail
because I believe it's an excellent example of the changing
role of the school adjustment counselor. The times are
with us. The schools are one of the few institutions which

interacts with all of our young people. Because we are in the schools, and as such, interact with all of the students, we are very much looked to, to provide leadership in our communities as to how to meet our students' needs. The uniqueness of our jobs in the educational setting gives us great access to all of the students, and, in fact, all of the community. There is an additional benefit for we counselors dealing with so many students and their problems. Being involved in preventive development activities such as this can help the school adjustment counselor prevent burnout.

In addition to larger community efforts such as coalition-building, there is a great deal of interest in business school partnerships. The school adjustment counselor here, too, is looked to as the person providing information as to the realities our students live with, to help the group in their deliberations. I have spoken elsewhere in this handbook about my role in identifying the need for a mentor program to our business partners and in doing some of the training for mentors.

A similar role exists in the political/governmental realm. Often a local or state political figure will convene a group to share concerns about our young people; their education; their attitudes; their problems. I find that very often the school adjustment counselor is looked to for information.

A particularly significant situation exists regarding the role of social agencies in the school. Major turf issues seem to develop, particularly in this time of declining budgets and increasing needs. I think it is unfortunate when an adversarial relationship develops. There is more than enough room for all of our services. Several years ago I asked the Director of the Berkshire Council on Alcoholism and Addiction if that agency could provide a substance abuse counselor to spend some regular time in our school. At first she said she had no funding, then called me a few months later to say that she had rethought the situation and would provide one of her counselors, although she had no special funding, but had decided that I was correct in saying that the school was where the students are and that her agency could serve students more effectively if they came to school. The program was so successful that within six months there were requests from twelve school systems within Berkshire County for similar services. We all learned that our expectations were correct. Students took advantage of services that are on their "turf"; are easily accessible; are voluntary and are offered in a friendly, accepting manner. Actually, this last aspect was probably as crucial as any of the others, if not more so. Teens "turn off" even more quickly, I think, than do adults where there is too much procedure, or formality, or when they feel judged. Agencies which come into the school to provide direct

services to teens need to be particularly flexible and accepting if they are to be successful in their mission. Just as school adjustment counselors (who are often M.S.W. level social workers who interned in mental health centers or hospitals) need to understand the uniqueness of the school setting as a host agency, so too do agencies which are successful at establishing a meaningful presence within the school. Agency workers who have a patient or disease orientation will have a difficult time in the schools. I have found school personnel very accepting, and, in fact, delighted to welcome agencies into the school. I frequently hear that schools do not welcome agencies. I believe that the school adjustment counselor is in an excellent position to facilitate the entrance of agencies who want to be involved in helping.

Another example is our local Hospice which has had a bereavement program consisting of support groups for various age groups experiencing loss by death. Their programs for adults and young children were very successful, but they were having a very difficult time engaging adolescents. I am a member of their advisory board, and in that capacity suggested that they bring one of their workers to our school to provide the groups. In addition to the benefit of the direct service to our students, I believed there would be an additional benefit to the larger school community. Hospice involvement allows students to learn about Hospice, and the subliminal

messages that death is a part of life; that grieving is a process which everyone must go through and which takes time; and that talking about death and about those loved ones who have died is often very helpful. The principal, the support staff and the teachers were all willing to try offering the group during the school day. Staff referred students and a flyer was distributed so that students could refer themselves There were eleven students for the first session, nine for the second. The program has now been in existence for several years and is comfortably accepted. I act as the liaison person to the Hospice worker, to provide follow-up for those students who may require it, and to communicate the program to the school staff.

I believe there are many more possibilities for agency involvements in the school setting. I do not see their presence and/or involvement as replacing the school adjustment counselor but as an adjunct. Without the resident school adjustment counselor as a liaison person, the programs will probably not be as successful. The school adjustment counselor as a trained mental health counselor functioning within the educational setting, understands the mores of the school, and is the perfect liaison or coordinator of agency services within the school. I am distressed when I hear some school systems say they are hiring an agency as their primary mental health provider for students who are experiencing difficulties. There is no substitute for an effective

mental health counselor who "lives" within the school and
who has the confidence of the staff and students. That
person can enhance agency involvement in the school
setting. The key ingredient is mutual respect between the
agency representatives and the resident school adjustment
counselor.

I spoke earlier of the school adjustment counselor as
a spokesperson for children's issues, contacted by the
media and speaking in a more formal way on children's
issues about which the community is concerned. There is
also the opportunity to arrange for programs and speakers
to improve the mental health climate of the community. For
example, I had heard Dr. Robert Brooks of McLean Hospital
in Belmont, Massachusetts speak on the topic of children's
self-esteem at the annual Harvard Medical School Conference
on Suicide. I became most enthusiastic about bringing him
to Pittsfield to speak to parents and teachers and was able
to make that happen by inviting about thirty local
organizations to share in sponsoring this lecture which
would be beneficial for everyone: our children, their
parents, their teachers, and the community. The school
adjustment counselor is in an ideal position to encourage
and arrange for activities such as this.

Dealing with the Stress of the Job

Perhaps by now, you the reader are wondering why and how anyone would remain a school adjustment counselor for an extended period. As I write this, in my twenty-second year in the position, I realize that I have moments when I wonder why I continue, or how much longer I can and should continue. But these are only periods of brief duration. There are many more moments when I know why I'm in the school and feel lucky to be immersed in a career which affords me so many opportunities to feel "I've made a difference."

Each person reading this paper will have individualized ways of dealing with the stress of the job, but is interesting that people do not seem to burn out of this social work job as they do some others. I have been in the Pittsfield schools for twenty-two years. Very few school adjustment counselors have left except for retirement or budget cuts. There must be some ingredient which holds people. I believe it is the nature of the setting, the school. As I've said earlier, students do not come to be fixed but to develop, to grow. The school adjustment counselor has the opportunity to observe children over a long period of time, to watch them grow and develop. The school adjustment counselor also has the opportunity to intercede at an early stage of difficulty, to do prevention before problems escalate. Also, as suggested earlier, the nature of the school adjustment

counselor's position allows the latitude to observe the child in the system and effect systemic changes when that is appropriate. Making systemic changes and providing prevention activities are opportunities to help people with do not exist for mental health professionals in many other settings.

Early in my career as a helping professional, a very experienced school counselor encouraged me to think about my own personal needs which were being fulfilled as I went about the activities of this job which gives me the opportunity to "make a difference." As the years have gone by, I realize how much wisdom there was in this seemingly simple bit of advice. It is too easy when one does work whose goals are basically "good deeds" to become comfortably self-satisfied and lose humility about ourselves. I realized many years ago that I was, like most other people, making choices which met my own needs and that I obviously get many of my individual needs met by helping others. Being aware of my own needs helps me keep balanced, and maintain what I hope is a healthy perspective as I do my work, work which allows me into people's lives in a very personal way.

Some recent stories elucidate this opportunity to make a difference, this factor which has been so important in keeping me from burning out. Recently, a sixteen-year-old boy I work with named Eric knocked on my door accompanied by a friend I didn't recognize. "This is Mike," he said.

"Remember, I told you in group last week that I had a friend I was worried about. This is the friend. I told him he could talk to you, he could get help. His parents wouldn't have to know if he didn't want them to. He said they'd kill him if they knew."

There stood this boy I'd never seen before, one of those students who looks so "together" he could easily fool even we professionals who think we know what's going on with students. I invited him to sit down. First I told him about me, and about confidentiality. Then we talked. He told me he had been a casual marijuana user but was now getting "high" about twice a day as well as using acid when he could find it. He thought the only way for him to stop was to go to a rehabilitation center but was very frightened about the ramifications of that. He said his parents would be very disappointed in him and that this was the last thing they needed right now. His father had just received a layoff notice after twenty-three years at the largest company in the area as a result of major cutbacks in the defense industry. I told him how impressed I was at his maturity in seeking help. He seemed willing to see our substance abuse counselor the next time she came to the school; he has seen her five times thus far and is doing well. He has finally been able to tell his parents about his problem. He seems very serious about changing his behavior.

I'm so glad that I was there, in the school, when he
was ready for help, so glad that the climate exists that
it's okay to seek help in Pittsfield High School, so glad
that this community, with all its current financial
problems, accepts the premise that teens will use services
which are available within the school. School is their
"turf."

My excitement with Mike energizes me! I see many
students with stories similar to Mike's, children who are
not noisily acting out (these students usually get noticed
enough to get their needs met) but who are greatly involved
in risky behavior which is hurting them. Each of these
students arrived at my door, some alone, some with a
friend, some with a teacher, to ask for help. The
satisfaction in realizing that this climate of acceptance
is a reality and in seeing students actually seek out help
for their problems is a powerful antidote to burnout for
me. There is some sadness, however, in the reality that
many schools do not have an on-site mental health counselor
who students can easily contact without penetrating layers
of bureaucracy.

One of the pluses of staying in a job for a long time
is being able to receive feedback from students I worked
with many years ago. Often they write when their
self-esteem is high enough to do so, and often that takes
many years. Two months ago I received a particularly
moving letter from a girl who I haven't seen since she

graduated six years ago. She said she's tried for a long time to think of a gift to thank me for caring about her, and had decided that the best gift was to tell me about her life. An excerpt:

It has been well over six years since I last saw you and I feel it necessary to write to you at this time in my life...I feel the need to tell you what you did for me during my adolescent years. You see, I surely would not be here now if you had never been there for me. You seemed to be the only person who cared about me, even though it was your job. Though my mother tried her best, she was growing up alongside of me, so you were my role model...I feel lucky to have had you in my life. Since high school I have gone through many changes, in and out of school, unhealthy relationships, a little college, and several attempts at climbing the corporate ladder. I have finally discovered "me"--am happily married to a wonderful man who married "me." I find myself pondering on what could have been had I never met you; you instilled healthy thinking in me at a young age so I could grow up to make good decisions. You helped make me aware of the quality person behind my sad face.

Being available to staff and interacting with them to problem-solve is another way I decrease burnout. I don't think people burn out when they feel empowered. Conversely, a sense of powerlessness seems to lead to depression and/or burnout for me as well as for others with whom I interact. Recently several teachers came to see me to talk about their perception of tension in the school. I called a special meeting of our staff support group. The support groups' perceptions of the situation corroborated the teachers' suspicions. We decided to suggest to the principal that there be a meeting to talk about how we, working as a group, could improve the atmosphere in the school, de-escalate the tension. We proposed the use of a current video which powerfully illustrates the difficulties for teachers and others working in education in meeting the multiple, and often conflicting, academic and emotional needs of our students. One of the great things about the job of the school adjustment counselor is that a school is a ready-made community for dealing with problems that emerge in that community. I am not simply a band-aid provider, a fixer. I have the chance to develop, to educate, to prevent. There are not many places in the mental health profession, or in the whole society, for that matter, where that opportunity exists.

I have the sense that people burn out when they feel powerless, victimized, helpless. The uniqueness of the school adjustment counselor's job, at least when viewed

systemically, helps me to feel empowered. It's a wonderful

feeling! No words can adequately describe the joy I felt

when Mike came to the door looking for help. That feeling,

that joy prevents me from burning out, from losing the

essential ingredients for success in this field: caring,

creativity, and commitment.

Similarly, when report cards were given out last

November, three students, one, a boy who had been called

"school phobic"; another, a girl who at first seemed

"tough" having lived in eleven foster homes; and a third, a

teenage mother who will graduate from high school this year

and go on to Berkshire Community College, all brought their

report cards to me to see them. In each case, the odds in

favor of these students doing well in high school were very

low. It is not surprising that intervention and support

help. There is sufficient data to corroborate this

statement. What is exciting is their desire to share their

successes with me. It was a wonderful antidote to burnout.

This past Thanksgiving the minister who organizes the

community-wide Service of Thanksgiving invited me to be the

speaker as a response to my work with teens. This

recognition for and appreciation of what I do has a

powerful energizing effect on me. Similarly, the local

newspaper often asks one of the local school adjustment

counselors to comment on various issues regarding teens or

younger children. I have discussed this aspect of our work

with some of my colleagues. They concur that the

188

opportunity to communicate our views to the general community has a very energizing effect. I realize that this opportunity would probably not be available to adjustment counselors in large cities, but hopefully, there are other ways for those who are located in metropolitan areas to transmit their views to the community-at-large. I think you'll find that having an opportunity to educate the larger community as to the realities of children's and teens' lives will be very satisfying, a powerful antidote to burnout.

This would be an incomplete discussion of dealing with burnout if I didn't say something about personal needs. Those of us who have chosen to be professional helpers may never totally know why we get so much pleasure from helping others. I don't believe we really need to know why. We do, however, need to acknowledge and accept that this _is_ a personal need, that we are meeting our personal needs through helping others. Carl Rogers often said the counseling profession is a socially approved way of meeting some of our individual needs. In his recent book, <u>A Way of Being</u>, often quoted in this paper, he recounts how early in his career he discovered the thrill that comes from observing changes in a person's behavior (page 34), a thrill which lasted throughout his personal life.

The school adjustment counselor similarly has the possibility to experience this thrill, and can add another component in this area of human growth and change. The

school adjustment counselor is in the school, is present in the setting in which the students live. The school adjustment counselor has the whole school, and often even the larger community, in which to intervene to make a difference for the students.

I think I would have left my job by now if I were isolated in an office, seeing individual students in a traditional model, having little interaction with the principal, the teachers, the guidance counselors, the support staff, the many people who make up a school. The systemic view, which often means I look at the total school environment rather than only within the student, when change is necessary, has an additional benefit in that the school adjustment counselor has the opportunity "to share" the problem. It is somehow easier to cope with a student who reports having been abused when there are several staff members concerned about the problem, and all are seeking solutions together.

Other places in this paper I talk about collaborative efforts with staff members. Collaboration is to me one of the most beneficial activities the school adjustment counselor can pursue in that it is a win-win situation. The students are helped from the involvement of several staff members, the staff members are helped immeasurably from a diminished sense of isolation and from sharing the problem and the often difficult situations which may occur after the problem is communicated.

For many years I've had interns, some in associate's degree programs, some in bachelor's degree programs, some in master's degree programs, and some already possessing master's degrees, wanting to enhance their skills in working with adolescents. Working with these interns has been a great help to me. They listen to me when I need a listening ear, they ask questions which help me to clarify my own thinking, they give me feedback. They function as another adult to whom I, as well as the students, can communicate. At Christmas time a former intern, now in a master's degree program, came to visit. She told me how much she'd learned as a school adjustment counselor intern at Pittsfield High School. In addition to the obvious uplift from the compliment, she corroborated my strong belief in the systemic view of school adjustment counseling. She said as she's continued with her education, she's interned in several schools and that she had seen so many situations in which the approach was intra-psychic, more medically oriented. She was struck by the opportunity they were missing to use the environment of the school, to look at the context and perhaps make changes in that environment as part of their efforts.

The ongoing involvement with interns is another win-win situation and one which is clearly an antidote to burnout. Teaching, which allows the teacher to communicate to others, and to feel listened to is so very empowering. The continuous dialogue and struggle to improve keep me

energized. I always worried about stagnation, but now in my twenty-second year, I can say that has not happened to me. The involvement with interns has been, I believe, one of the important factors in maintaining personal and professional growth.

Having said all of these positive things about aspects of school adjustment counseling which keep me from burning out, I need to say that the demands are becoming extreme, in that there are so many needs for individual students, their families, the general community, and so few counselors because of budget cuts—city, state, and national. It is vitally important for the school adjustment counselor to take care of herself/himself, to have a many-dimensional life. There are so few external limits on the school adjustment counseling function. This is both its strength and its weakness. Because the limits are not clearly defined, the school adjustment counselor can continue to be creative, constantly being aware of the needs of the school and seeking new ways to meet those needs. On the other hand, the lack of clear limits, the large number of students, the severity of their problems and their families' problems, the difficult school environment in which teachers and others have diminished job security, are all significant factors in having the job assume gargantuan proportions. In fact, the job could consume the school adjustment counselor. Setting limits is an ongoing task, one I have worked on for many years. It

is not an easy task. Part of what makes school adjustment
counseling successful is its flexibility. The counselor is
in the school, where the students "live." When a problem
occurs, the counselor is immediately available. On the
other hand, this is one of the strengths of the position,
one of the aspects which distinguishes it from schools who
contract with agencies to counsel students individually. I
have already discussed the benefits of talking to entire
class groups, and of facilitating parent education and of
participating in community coalitions. These activities
obviously take a great deal of time.

How do you do all this within a forty hour week? Time
management continues to be a complex task. I try to leave
some time open each day for crisis intervention. I see all
students referred at least once, and then decide, with the
student, what is the best way to help. Some students join
an ongoing group, some have their families come for one or
several family meetings. Often, from these family
meetings, outside counseling will be recommended. Interns
are a great help in seeing some of the students. I
encourage other staff members to participate in many of the
community coalitions, and in truth, some of the activities
are not done for lack of time. It is important for me to
continuously pay attention to time management and case
management, to establish priorities, to maintain focus. As
I've said earlier, I do not try to emulate a mental health
center. I encourage students to go to the mental health

center and private mental health professionals for ongoing
individual counseling. I prioritize those activities which
can best be done in the school, always focusing on the
unique contextual function of the school in dealing with
our student's mental health. Turf issues among helpers and
agencies can also become a problem. The school adjustment
counselor is in an excellent position to minimize such
happenings. Our students and families' emotional needs are
very great. There is more than enough room for various
kinds of involvement by helpers. When the family is
agreeable, it is usually beneficial for the student to go
to an outside mental health setting for ongoing counseling.
There is no way that most school adjustment counselors have
the time for ongoing fifty minute/hour counseling sessions.
The school adjustment counselor can be very helpful by
encouraging the student and family in this direction. The
student usually benefits when the family, the school, and
the mental health setting all cooperate, once again, a
systemic approach.

I talked earlier about a multi-faceted life as a
significant antidote to burnout. Each person needs to
consider for herself/himself what those facets will be.
For me, family life is a major facet, along with friends,
classical music, and tennis. Living and working not only
in the same community, but within a five minute walk could
easily erase the line between home and work. I do not have
an unlisted telephone number because I believe it's

unethical to be completely unavailable in an emergency.
Instead, I tell students and parents that I am listed in
the telephone book if they need me, but that I do need to
have time for my family and myself. I ask their
cooperation in calling me only if they need me. In twenty
years there have been very few people who have abused the
situation and called me without a very important reason at
home.

Recently I was asked what nourishes me in my work,
what keeps me going? I have already listed many of my
personal antidotes to burnout. There is one more very
special anti-burnout factor. I am fortunate to have a
support system in the school, teachers, guidance
counselors, agency people, who are extremely nurturing. I
like to think we are there for one another, providing a cup
of tea when necessary, a pat on the back, a listening ear.
This mutual therapeutic community matters immeasurably to
me.

A speaker at a recent substance abuse conference
addressing the increasingly overwhelming needs of the
adolescents we work with, used words which were meaningful.
He said the "space between us", the therapeutic community
(I would add educational community) was the most powerful
force we have to keep ourselves going, and ultimately, to
help our students. The school setting is ideal for
developing a sense of community, for building connectedness
among the staff and for larger community connections, the

parents, the various agencies concerned with children's and adolescents' needs. Our sense of community empowers one another. That sense of empowerment prevents burnout.

C H A P T E R   V

EVALUATION

A draft of the handbook was distributed to twenty-five
reviewers along with a letter, evaluation input matrix, and
questionnaire (See Appendices B, C, and D). They were
asked to complete the matrix and questionnaire. The
reviewers included new School Adjustment Counselors,
experienced School Adjustment Counselors, people in Master
Degree programs (M.S.W., M.Ed., or M.A.), training to
become School Adjustment Counselors, and other school
personnel in related fields. Reviewers were given three
weeks to return their responses.

Twenty-four reviewers returned the materials sent to
them completely filled out. One reviewer chose not to use
the matrix and questionnaire, but instead, wrote a letter
regarding his reactions to the handbook. His comments will
be reflected in the general impressions of the handbook
section, but the matrix will be representative of the
twenty-four respondents who read the handbook.

Of those twenty-four respondents who completed the
matrix and questionnaire, the following is a breakdown of
their backgrounds.

Professional background of reviewers:
- New School Adjustment Counselors   7
- Experienced School Adjustment Counselors   7
- School Adjustment Counselors in Training   4

- School personnel in related field   5

    (These include a guidance counselor, a

    substance abuse counselor, a mediation

    coordinator, a parent coordinator, and an

    outreach counselor.)

- Administrators   1

The response was overwhelmingly positive. Every one
of the reviewers liked the handbook, many seeming to have
boundless enthusiasm for its existence. A first-year
outreach counselor said: "This book has been like a Bible
to me." An experienced social worker who worked for
fourteen years as an outpatient clinician in a mental
health center, and recently became a school adjustment
counselor said, "I wish I had this handbook when I started
the job. It so clearly delineates the role of a school
adjustment counselor and helped me to understand the
dynamics of the position, (different from my work at a
mental health agency). It would have saved me a lot of
growing pains." A young woman graduate of Wellesley
College who is currently a candidate for an M.S.W. at Smith
College School of Social Work said, "This is a
well-written treatise concerning an area which is not given
sufficient due in many training programs for social
workers, psychologists or school adjustment Counselors....I
found it extremely useful."

Feedback on the Matrix

In evaluating the matrix (Table 1), one can see that the general impression of the handbook rated very high in each of the categories which readers evaluated, receiving a preponderance of fives or fours in each of the seven categories. While all sections of the handbook received primarily fives and fours throughout the matrix, some patterns emerge, although not dramatically. These are consistent with comments on each section, as well as with the responses for the Critical Concerns and the General Questions. The highest ratings were for the general impression of the handbook; Section III, the systemic point of view; Section IV, the Activities Section; and Section V, Dealing With the Stress of the Job. Ranked lower were Section I and Section II which were Introduction and Background. These listings appear consistent in that new ideas and specific activities were not presented in those sections. Since this document is intended to be a handbook, its usability and helpfulness were the key concerns.

Sections I and II were designed to set the tone, to provide the rationale for the handbook. The responses to Section I were generally favorable, but readers were not as enthusiastic as they were to other sections which contained more specific information and ideas. Readers did comment

TABLE 1

Evaluation Matrix

1 = Poor   3 = Good, but needs more work
2 = OK (unclear, off   4 = Very Good
    target, a lot   5 = Excellent
    missing)   Not Applicabale

	Clarity	Relevance	Inclusive	New Ideas	Usable	New Thinking	New Actions	Comments
I. Introduction	5=9 4=9 3=6	5=12 4=9 3=2	5=7 4=14 3=3	5=11 4=11 3=2	5=14 4=6 3=2 NA=2	5=11 4=11 3-2	5=8 4=11 3=2 NA=3	17
II. Background	5=12 4=7 3=5	5=14 4=0 3=1	5=11 4=6 3-7	5=9 4=9 3=4 NA=2	5=10 4=6 3=4 NA=4	5=10 4=8 3=4 NA=2	5=6 4=7 3=4 NA=7	13
III. Systemic Point of View	5=1 4=12 3=1	5=17 4=7	5=11 4=10 3=2 NA=1	5=11 4=12 3=1	5=16 4=8	5=13 4=10 3=1	5=9 4=10 3=4 NA=1	12
Activities for Students	5=18 4=4 3=2	5=21 4=3	5=13 4=7 3=3 NA=1	5=12 4=11 3=1	5=19 4=4 3=1	5=12 4=10 3=2	5=13 4=9 3=1 NA=1	17
Activities for Staff	5=16 4=6 3=2	5=20 4=4	5=10 4=10 3=4	5=15 4=7 3=2	5=15 4=7 3=2	5=13 4=10 3=1	5=13 4=7 3=2 2=1 NA=1	19
Activities for Parents	5=12 4=10 3=2	5=18 4=5 3=1	5=12 4=9 3=3	5=13 4=8 3=2 NA=1	5=16 4=6 3=3	5=14 4=7 3=2 2=1	5=14 4=6 3=3 NA=1	10
Activities for Community	5=11 4=9 3=4	5=17 4=4 3=3	5=11 4=7 3=4 2=1 NA=1	5=13 4=8 3=2 2=1	5=12 4=10 3=2	5=11 4=10 3=2 2=1	5=11 4=6 3=5 2=1 NA=1	7
V. Dealing with the Stress of the Job	5=15 4=7 3=1 2=1	5=15 4=7 3-1 2=1	5=10 4=10 3=3 2=2	5=11 4=7 3=4 2=1 NA=1	5=14 4=6 3=3 2=1	5=13 4=5 3=4 2=1 NA=1	5=12 4=5 3=4 2=1 NA=2	11
General Impression of the Handbook	5=16 4=6 3=2	5=19 4=5	5=11 4=11 3=2	5=15 4=7 3=2	5=15 4=8 3=1	5=12 4=10 3=2	5=12 4=9 3=2 NA=1	17

favorably on the themes the writer hoped to develop,

particularly the developmental perspective on counseling in

the schools and the uniqueness of the school adjustment

counseling position. The reader comments for Section I
follow:

- Some sentences seem cumbersome.

- Thoughts were big. I found I needed to look them up.

- Section ended abruptly; needs to be tied to Section 2.

- Ideas good; sentence structure needs work.

- Good perspective on historical events.

- Concise and clear-very understandable.

- Remedial vs. developmental: important point; Privatization of counseling: great argument against it.

- Many of the concepts have been circulating for years; the author's description shows how relevant and applicable they remain.

- Clearly written; easy to understand.

- I think my 4's would be 5's for others. Gave relevance a 5+.

- Too long. Need to condense ideas. Highlight major issues and themes in opening statements.

- Your introduction does have the desired effect of making me want to read on so that I can see what specific things you are suggesting.

- Send copy to superintendent to further inform him of SAC's work and potentially to show to School Committee if they question the job.

- Particularly liked the idea of SAC as unique, yet part of the system; not like an outside therapist coming in. I was able to see myself from a new perspective as part of a whole system, the school with everyone in it. It's always refreshing to step back. I feel validated already.

- Understanding of unique environment of school.

- Excellent; well stated.

In Section II readers found the definition of a school adjustment counselor helpful. They responded positively, too, to the subtle difference between school adjustment counselor and school social worker. Several people were concerned that the references in the review of literature were not sufficiently updated. The review of literature in Chapter II of the dissertation has been updated and will be included in the handbook when it is reprinted in the future. Following are the reader comments for Section II:

- Wonderful part about the variety of roles the SAC plays.

- Defining term SAC very helpful. Important point separating SAC from strictly remedial function.

- A bit scattered.

- Interesting idea to distinguish SAC from social worker.

- Realize review of literature not intended to be exhaustive, but some more recent references would be helpful.
- I agree with the definition of SAC.
- I like the description of SAC vs. social worker and agree with this seemingly subtle difference. I like the idea of any school staff being able to facilitate growth and change. Ideally we work together, not one against the other.
- Helpful longitudinal view.
- Good point about the term social worker. History is interesting.
- I'd be interested in knowing what's going on in rest of country.
- Review of literature heavily weighted with older references.
- Helpful to see the chronology of supportive services. Very important point. Environmental vs. intrinsic default in child.
- Great point on first page of handbook: students don't come to school to get fixed; schools task primarily to develop; not remedial.
- Very well written; good ideas

Section III, the systemic point of view, received almost all fives and fours. There were comments showing enthusiasm for the inclusion of Carl Rogers, along with systemic thinking Most readers seemed very comfortable

about the synergy of Carl Rogers and systemic thinking, but
one reader thought it was not entirely clear how Rogers and
systemic thinking are tied together. Reader comments on
Section III follow:

- Structural moves very helpful. Loved discussion
  of issue of safety. Loved "Becoming is Superior
  to Being".

- It might be interesting to describe roles
  individuals may have in a team meeting from
  various perspectives to solve a student's
  problems.

- Important: we implicitly declare ourselves as
  allies of family's struggle for independence.

- Not altogether clear how Rogers and systemic
  thinking are tied together.

- How do you teach others not to use linear
  blame-oriented thinking in situations in which
  SAC is not involved?

- Loved Carl Rogers; wanted more; a very spiritual
  quality to this section.

- Good review of systemic thinking.

- The best section I've read so far; your
  enthusiasm for Rogers is contagious.

- I strongly agree with the idea of working
  systemically with individuals. I find it
  interesting and exciting that Carl Rogers is as
  much an influence as the Milan group. Like

statement that you can work with people
systemically and individually at same time and
can embrace ideas of Rogers and systemic writers.
You do this so well that you might want to
elucidate and elaborate on this joining a lot
more. So much is accomplished by using systems
approach with individuals.

- Discussion on Rogers is so very clear.
- The systemic approach is not new for me. It is
  how I have always operated.
- Appreciated discussion of therapy vs. counseling.
  Glad you included it.
- Great job!

Section IV, the Activities section, received very
favorable ratings. Readers responded positively to the
entire section, but almost all of the readers gave ratings
of five to the sections covering activities for staff and
activities for students. In the activities for students
section, several readers appreciated the distinction
between therapy and counseling. Many commented about their
enthusiasm for this section, saying it was a "good nuts and
bolts chapter." Reader comments on the **Activities for
Students** follow:

- Differentiates between crisis and support.
- A helpful, informative section.
- Function of misbehavior (symptom) in the system
  an important concept. Appreciate the inclusion

of distinction between therapy (psychotherapy).
Good nuts and bolts section, especially for
people training to become SACs.

- Like heading of self-disclosure. Appreciated
  story about Ron. It humanized the book
- Liked techniques "gossiping in the present".
- It would have been interesting to have a more
  thorough discussion of different kinds of
  students and staff.
- Peer education very helpful to me. Your emphasis
  on group work is good for me to learn about.
- Nice distinction between "therapy" and
  "counseling". I struggle with this.
- Thought "red flag" concept was poignant. Good
  distinction between counseling and therapy.
- Clear and direct: it showed me empathy for kids.
- I like the human aspect; makes a lot of sense.
- Would appreciate examples of groups at elementary
  levels.
- Excellent, all 5's-but I want to hear more how
  to's, details.
- Thought this section was great.
- The atmosphere of trust and confidentiality in
  groups is crucial and stated very well in Section
  IV. Good distinction between activist leader and
  leaderless group.

- I really liked this section: Individual, Group, and Peer. It make me realize how much we cover in a day's work.
- Love section on bereavement groups.

Similarly, readers commented enthusiastically about many aspects of the **Activities for Staff** section. Several readers noted the staff support groups and classroom meetings. They responded to the idea of demystifying of mental health as a way to increase the mental health climate of the school. One reader said, "I found this section to be perhaps the most educationally beneficial. Master's level training usually teaches working with students and families, but generally neglects working with staff, and it is one of the most important aspects of working in the real world of the educational setting." Reader comments on the **Activities for Staff** section follow:

- Can you touch on dealing with the **difficult teacher** (burned-out, abusive, neglectful, incompetent, "old" thinking); or does it also indicate problem with the environment, system that must be addressed?
- I love your suggestion that teachers might accompany SAC on home visits. I particularly appreciated your inclusion of breaking down the "we/they" attitude in the school.
- Bravo for systemic approach to screening meetings.

- Your thoughts are well taken and didn't hide them in parentheses; BIG BOLD!
- I like the statement, "We are all part of the mental health climate of the school."
- Clear, logical; I like your points regarding meeting departments in schools.
- Great part. "The best way to increase teachers' awareness of the impact of emotions on learning is to deal with the individual teacher's own emotions."
- Terrific!--"Perhaps the best advantage of all this is breaking down the notion of we/they. We are all part of the mental health climate of the school."
- I found this section to be perhaps the most educationally beneficial. Masters level training most often teaches working with students and families but neglects working with staff, and it is one of the most important aspects of working in the real world (when in an educational setting)
- Good explanation of activities.
- I love your idea of support groups for staff. Classroom meeting section is quite useful. Good specifics. Presentation piece also interesting. Helpful to be reminded that teachers do not always know that we take for granted.

- I like the idea of demystifying mental health as a way to increase the mental health of a school. I like your thoughts about classroom meetings. I think I'd refuse to do one if teachers refused to stay. I'd like more about elementary school classroom meetings.

- I love the staff support group idea.

- Loved staff support group section.

- Thought this section was great.

- Loved ideas on classroom meetings.

- Important part. A key for me is to enhance the teachers' power in the classroom not diminish it by my presence.

- Segment on activities for staff very helpful. The presentations to the teachers regarding issues of mental wellness, and the idea of staff support groups are particularly useful. These activities, provided that they are implemented in the gentle and non-judgmental way demonstrated in the book, appear to be marvelous tools for allying staff around the concerns of the student population while at the same time providing for the teachers' needs.

- Good idea to ponder: that some teachers are not ready for change.

Reader comments on the **Activities for Parents** section follow:

- I'd like to hear about more of the cases you're dealing with.

- Great ideas

- While the parenting group sounds great, and obviously you have gotten many interested parties involved, are you getting those families which would probably benefit the most from attending? Any ideas?

- Great comment: "People's self-esteem is enhanced when they believe they have options and diminished when they feel powerless to make choices."

- Too general

- You seem to have a great ability to join with parents and families.

- "Family meeting" vs. "counseling": Great idea!

- Short-term goals: good reminder. Good example of how to begin parent session. Appreciated sample letters. Great idea to include parents and students.

- Appreciated technique of preliminary organization of parent education series.

- Emphasis on searching for understanding through acceptance and agreement rather than placing blame or seeking pathologies is right on target.

Reader comments on the **Activities for the School and the General Community** section follow:

- Sections seem fragmented.
- You make it sound so simple and easy, and I realize it isn't.
- It's helpful to view the many ways you suggest a SAC can benefit a school.
- Needs to be more specific.
- Great ideas about coalition building.
- Your patience and success in building coalitions to overcome cliques is outstanding.
- I like the tie-ins to community mental health services. It works on paper and in practice.
- We need more time with colleagues to meet and talk about the job both formally and informally. We also need more supervision, or peer supervision.

Readers were responsive to Section V, **Dealing With the Stress of the Job**, and thought it was important to include this in the handbook. Some respondents were very enthusiastic about the writing of the section, (there were fifteen fives for clarity and relevance), but there was a feeling that the section was not inclusive enough, or perhaps too personal. One reader, an experienced school adjustment counselor, who rated the rest of the handbook predominately fives, and commented that every new school adjustment counselor should receive a copy when he/she is hired, rated this section with twos because he felt the section was too shallow. In addition to being a school

adjustment counselor, he teaches various forms of relaxation exercises, such as Tai Chi. He suggested that the section should include various examples of relaxation techniques to help counselors cope with the stress of the job. A compilation of the reader comments for Section V, **Dealing with the Stress of the Job**, follow:

- When something isn't working, you need the courage to try something else.
- Important section.
- It feels as if this is such a hot topic of our times and a subject that could require a whole book to cover adequately.
- Needs more detail.
- Fantastic: Need I say more?
- Need reorganization to help with clarity, but does an excellent job.
- Burnout definitely an issue in job. Glad you deal with it.
- This section has a spiritual quality. It is affirming.
- At times, section is redundant.
- Supportive of administration and developing a good relationship with administration is paramount.
- Only weak section: too shallow.

It was particularly interesting to the writer that the matrix responses for the general impression of the handbook

were so extremely positive. Even in cases where readers had specific criticisms of some aspects of the handbook, it did not diminish their overall impression. For example, the reader mentioned in the paragraph above, who was concerned that the section dealing with the stress of the job needed to include other specific activities, rated the overall handbook as all fives. The reader comments on the **General Impression of the Handbook** follow:

- The handbook makes perfect sense. Overall flow is excellent!
- I really enjoyed your personal account that illustrate specific points.
- Good overall outline which was the intent. A good introduction to School Adjustment Counseling. The outline is applicable to my department. Each section could be researched further for greater detail, but the handbook reads well and is worthwhile and needed.
- Written by someone who know her profession inside and out.
- On the whole, the heart of the book was wonderful. I just wanted more.
- I truly enjoyed reading the handbook; useful ideas,
- I have written one proposal and could write another since I read this handbook.

- A useful book which would be nice to have in the office as a reference.

- I am very impressed with this work. I feel it needs more current research.

- Wonderful!

- I really liked your first person voice. It sets a very nice tone and gives your handbook a personal quality.

- I wish I had this handbook when I started the job. It so clearly delineates the role of a SAC and helped me to understand the dynamics of the position (different from my work as a mental health agency). It would have saved me a lot of growing pains.

- This is some piece of work; you should be very proud.

- Great job! Desperately needed!

- Nice job! Your voice and style are so clear to me in your writing. Thank you for sharing it with me.

- This is a well written treatise concerning an area which is not given sufficient due in many training programs for social workers, psychologists, or SACs.

Feedback on Open-Ended Questions

The matrix was followed by a one sheet questionnaire. The first section of this sheet asked information about the two critical questions which were the rationale for writing the handbook. The first was, "In what ways have you found the handbook to be useful?", and the second was, "In what ways has the emphasis on a systems approach changed and/or confirmed your own systems thinking and systemic activities or interventions.?" In writing the handbook, it had been the writer's belief that there was a need for such a handbook, that people would indeed use it, and that the systemic perspective is the one which needed to be promulgated as the future direction of school adjustment counseling. **The Critical Concerns** questions and reader comments follow:

A. In what ways have you found the handbook to be usable? Please list and describe specific examples.

- Working with parents: How to approach something that can be uncomfortable. Your advice re: family meetings was very helpful. How to connect with faculty: often informally. Joining: I often see people fail because they don't take this approach. Being a team player is critical. Classroom meetings are new to me. This section was very helpful

- Your systemic thinking, specific accounts of situations, accomplishments, demonstrates how dynamic of relationships play out.

- Yes, I liked the references to William Glasser and Carl Rogers. I liked many of the activities described; supporting teachers, use of specialized agencies in the school setting.

- The main thing that I liked about the handbook is that it broadens the definition of SAC to include "The sky is the limit." For those SACs who read this, it allows them to venture into uncharted territory and potentially initiate change. It also gives SACs permission or confirmation for thoughts or activities that many have been sure about.

- You have provided numerous examples in Section 4. I like the way you broke your role into working with students, staff, parents and community and provide a number of examples in each category as to how you service each group.

- As a first year outreach counselor, this book has been like a Bible to me. It has reinforced many of my observations and, most importantly, helped me realize that issues between students and a traditional system are universal. I have been amazed at the needs of students and more amazed at the denial of their needs by administrators.

This book helped me realize it wasn't a fake perception on my part.

- Your many creative ideas-emphasis on "becoming"-you continually state it. Great statements, almost spiritual; helped me as an administrator to understand the job more fully.

- Practical application and ideas to try. Validation and acknowledgment of the difficult and adverse role of the SAC which gives me hope and encouragement. Clarifying therapy vs. counseling. Good section on group counseling. Practical ideas on staff support and parental involvement.

- The handbook was extremely useful in many ways, one of which was to define and clarify the term "school adjustment counselor". A common misconception is to think of any type of counselor as serving a strictly remedial function, closely allied to the entrenched medical model of mental illness. The school adjustment counselor is bound by vastly different circumstances than a private mental health professional, namely, the school setting itself, and thus must make use of a systemic, developmental model to serve the school-age population. The segment on activities for staff in school settings was also very helpful. The

presentations to the teachers regarding issues of
mental wellness, and the idea of staff support
groups are particularly useful. These
activities, provided they are implemented in the
gentle and non-judgmental fashion described in
the handbook, appear to be marvelous tools for
rallying staff around the concerns of the student
population, while at the same time, providing for
the teachers' needs.

- The handbook describes the kind of position I am
  seeking, and it is encouraging to know that SACs
  exist and perform the functions you write about.
  When I go to interviews I will be able to refer
  to the handbook and the work that has been done
  in Pittsfield to cite a powerful and positive
  example to illustrate how I would be of benefit
  to the school system. This handbook suggests to
  me all of the opportunities which are available
  for a SAC to be creative and flexible, to create
  and implement programs. I wrote "not applicable"
  to the "New Actions" category in the matrix
  because I am still in training, not yet working
  in the field, but this handbook will certainly
  stimulate new actions if and when I get hired.

- I found the section on activities for staff
  perhaps the most educationally beneficial.
  Masters level training most often teaches working

with students and families but neglects working with staff. It is one of the most important aspects of working in the real world when in an educational setting.

- Your philosophy—suggested activities and the history of the position
- Yes—your philosophy!
- Section IV is wonderful! You present many ideas and "how to's" which are incredibly helpful. I really appreciate the systemic thinking and how you connect the theory with everyday situations. Section V: Stress is also a very important section considering the all-consuming potential of this job.
- This handbook can be used to acquaint individuals with the roles and functions of School Adjustment Counselors. The book also helps outline the changing trends in guidance. I've used this book in a course I teach at North Adams State College to explain school adjustment counseling. The outline is readily applicable to other school systems than the one discussed.
- It was very insightful, effectively integrating appropriate therapeutic techniques into the school structure. The emphasis on the individuality of each school was great.

- The section dealing with groups. I believe in a school setting you can target more students, although I have found it difficult to get groups going. Staff support groups are a great idea.
- It confirmed that many of the things I've tried to implement are good ideas. I think this could be a very useful tool for all SACs, especially new SACs, to have as a reference manual.
- This handbook describes what I do daily. It capsulizes the way I work in the school setting. Reading about Carl Rogers makes me realize how much alike we both are in our styles of counseling. I really liked Section IV—much that is helpful to my everyday work.
- I was really attracted to activities for students, parents and teachers. I liked the way you incorporated your systemic philosophy into concrete interventions. I can see myself in the future in a counseling position wondering why a particular part of my work is not going the way I had intended. I can picture that my first line of help might be to pick up your book to get some insights.
- Very supportive of my ideas and role: some new ideas and language (i.e. family meeting vs. counseling; remedial vs. developmental role of SAC).

- Readability: loved idea of SAC as unique to the educational institution—part of it—differentiates from outside therapist. Lots of usable ideas. Very helpful in dealing with staff in schools. Helps me in struggle with "therapy" vs. "counseling".

- Coalition building; metaphor of the handbook as cookbook; the discussions about change as important in its many facets; discussion of systemic approach places schoolroom in perspective. It helps the reader begin to envision a therapeutic community in which we are as strong as the weakest among us. The approach is very positive.

- If I were a new SAC, this would give me so many tools; the ideas on groups, class meetings, parents, community—all the activities.

B. In what ways has the emphasis on a "systems" approach changed and/or confirmed your own "systems thinking" and systemic activities or "interventions"?

- I know I need to make more of an effort to join with teachers to increase the impact of my service. It was helpful to see that you had similar problems early in your career.

- Definitely confirmed my thinking because you have been in the system long enough to watch the effects of the interactions and interplay.

- I have been a believer in systems thinking for a number of years and am delighted to see this thinking as the basis for the handbook. Though it is not your intention here, I'd like to see administrators, central administration, and principals understand the whole school system systemically instead of a collection of problems.

- Since I come from a systems background, your emphasis confirms my belief as well as actions.

- A school is, without doubt, a system, just as every class is and every meeting that is held, and so I would say your parts regarding this are in accordance with my own beliefs, although I never thought about my work in this way. My personal struggle however, involves how I get others to see the school in the same way. I worry about the impact of the things teachers say to students (especially) and parents, and realize I can do little about this except to intervene by models of my own behavior.

- There needs to be a system that is inclusive. I see kids reaching out and learning quickly that it is them against the system.

- The emphasis on a "systems" approach cemented my own belief in this method, especially for working with families. The school adjustment counselor is in a unique position to help de-stigmatize the

notion of families coming together to arrive at a common understanding. So often change is impossible to effect in a singular insulated area of family life--that of the student as daughter, son, sister, brother, etc. It is impossible to overlook the fact that there is a conspicuous absence of blame in the meetings described by Mrs. Siegel. "When I make the initial call to the family, I try to decrease their anxiety by suggesting that we both want to help their child, that maybe by 'putting our heads together', we can figure out some ways to be helpful."

- The "systems" approach you describe has confirmed my beliefs regarding the role of the SAC. The link between school, students, families, staff and community is crucial and yet often overlooked. Extremely valuable to think about SAC work from systemic perspective.

- Mankind does not exist within a bubble; being social beings, we each have an effect on our community at large. I value your judgment in writing re: systems approach.

- It has confirmed my own thinking. Being in one building with a trusting principal has allowed me to use this approach.

- The emphasis on systems confirmed my own approach in working with students and staff, although I am

not a SAC. Team approach to counseling and
intervention makes sense to me too.

- This whole handbook has confirmed my views and
clarified for me why certain aspects of my work
within schools feels right (i.e. forming
relationships with principals and teachers,
nurses, who seem empathetic), not doing
traditional therapy, and providing an ear to
staff who need it and others. Trying to do
"therapy" in 45 minutes or in a setting which is
often interrupted does not feel right.

- Really hasn't changed my thoughts but has helped
me to clarify some of my actions. Helps reaffirm
my positioning on daily decision-making.
Reframing is much better than confirmation.
Joining is a very popular procedure within our
Guidance Department.

- It clarified systems thinking for me and was very
helpful in suggesting ways of appropriate systems
interactions and activities. It was inspiring.

- The "systems" approach supports what I have been
doing with students, families, and the community.
I agree with your philosophy that in order to
effect change in families, all systems must work
and communicate together.

- It has confirmed the importance of working with
all levels within a system (teachers, parents,

students) to educate and support them in order to provide necessary services and quality education for students and families.

- I have always worked systemically. This book has validated for me what I strongly believe: we are all working together, school family, and community, for the benefit of the student.

- I think I am already on board with systems thinking. However, I have the distinct feeling this may not be actually as easy to do in my real life as you do in your work or described in your book, if the system is not circular.

- Support for my approach. Potentially useful when naive staff criticize this approach.

- I strongly agree with the ideas of working systemically with individuals. I'm intrigued by Carl Rogers being as much of an influence as the Melian group— interesting and exciting!

- I have had at least one interesting conversation about systems approach with colleagues. Reading this handbook puts things I am doing in perspective and validates the process. It corroborates what I am doing and makes me eager to try more. The author's discussion about how to increase teacher awareness, the impact of intervention, learning by dealing with the individual teachers own emotions, is very

important. The group meetings after school seem
excellent. The concept of demystifying mental
health and including other is proactive.

- People need to look at systems. If you do not
understand, you will not be effective when a
school, parent, administrator, are in conflict
over some issue.

- Systems is the only way to operate in a school
setting. Wish we could educate the training
programs to this.

In reviewing the responses, it was satisfying that
each of the twenty-four readers found the handbook usable.
Many readers appreciated the specific ideas in Section IV,
especially regarding staff support, classroom meetings,
group counseling, and working with parents. Several others
found the philosophy of the writer most usable. Several
readers found the book validating: affirming their own
beliefs or activities. The tone which clearly permeated
the comments was that the handbook was a validation took,
that it acknowledged the difficult and diverse role of the
school adjustment counselor.

In summarizing the second critical question, "In what
ways has the emphasis on a systems approach changed and/or
confirmed your own systems thinking and systemic activities
or interventions?", twenty-one of the twenty-four
respondents said the systems approach used in the handbook
confirmed their own thinking. The other three, all

students in training, said the approach makes sense and has
helped them to clarify their own philosophies which are
still being developed. There was certainly overwhelming
support for the systemic view of thinking about/and doing
the job.

The last section of the questionnaire consisted of
five general questions. The first was: "What do you
consider the strengths of the handbook?" Ten of the
readers mentioned the style in which the handbook was
written. Several said: "It reads well." Several people
appreciated the personal accounts and experiences of the
writer and again commented on their positive feelings about
the systemic approach. Still others saw the strength in
the specific activities discussed in the handbook. The
complete responses to this open-ended question on the
strengths of the handbook is as follows:

1. What do you consider the strengths of the handbook?

- Personal, folksy, powerful, helpful, interesting,
  educational

- Handbook makes perfect sense. Overall flow is
  excellent. The style in which it is written is
  extremely readable. You also give concrete
  examples. I know how effective your style is. I
  see this working every day.

- The good balance between philosophical thinking,
  research and personal accounts; good descriptions
  of programs and their development.

- The emphasis on systems and systemic change.

- The introduction of the various dimensions of the job; the how-to regarding groups, parent education, and burn-out.

- I think it is a good description of the job and what functions a SAC serves. I think it would be especially helpful for individuals who are just beginning in their studies to be a SAC. I especially think Section IV is helpful in this regard.

- I love the style in which it is written. Heartfelt, honest, straightforward, the way the approach to systems must be.

- Useful, practical, good ideas on group counseling, staff support and parental involvement.

- Allows use of self in work; clarity and concise; resourceful; ideas explained so that replication is possible.

- The method of networking as described in the handbook is a definite strength. After reading the handbook, it became clear that it is crucial for the school adjustment counselor to work closely with the members of the school system in order to ensure quality care for the student.

- Emphasis on safety and importance of not undermining other staff. Very reader friendly. Layout of handbook clear and it flows nicely.

- Section on Activities for Staff; Section on Activities for Community and Parents. Nice bibliography. I would have found this handbook useful when I was a MA level student exploring the counseling profession.

- Your wisdom! The clarity of your ideas. Also, all the creative things you have done.

- Your insights and your experience.

- Sections IV and V. The whole idea of systemic thinking in working in a school setting and how you apply this to everyday situations.

- This is a good outline for what school adjustment counselors should be doing. It also shows the human side of working within a large institution (i.e., Pittsfield School Department). The handbook reads well.

- Sections III, IV and V. Clear that you are an expert in this area. Section III was excellent.

- Each section had great ideas to offer; the systems approach is useful information.

- That it's been put together from real life experiences rather than theory, taking into consideration that society as a whole has changed

and services in the schools also need to work
with this changing society.

- Ease of reading; human quality (let students
know you are a human, too, and also need a
private life.)

- The book is written in a very easy way. It is
very readable and practical. You've put into
words what we do each and every day.

- Readability, it makes sense, specific
interactions in Section IV.

- Ideas, systemic thinking, actions I can emulate.
Loved your thoughts about interns. Doing
systemic work with individuals.

- The handbook is readable and friendly. In some
ways it is like a conversation with the writer.
I like the print size, the book size. I like the
use of him/her, he/she. The handbook illuminates
concepts and encourages thought and inspires
action.

- The method of networking as described in the
handbook is a definite strength. After reading
the handbook it became clear that it is crucial
for the SAC to work closely with the other
members of the school system in order to ensure
quality care for the student.

The second question was: "What are the weaknesses of
the handbook?" Sixteen people responded to this question.

Seven people wanted more detail. Four people thought the
writing style should be "tightened up." This is difficult
for the writer to evaluate, since as stated above, ten of
the readers commented on the writing style as a positive
strength of the handbook. Following is a list of all the
responses to the second question:

2. What are its weaknesses?

- None. More detail.

- This is difficult to answer, as I've witnessed
  this philosophy's success as well as other
  approaches' failures.

- I wanted more!

- The writing needs to be tightened up so that the
  handbook is clear and direct. Circuitous
  sentences do not project your wonderful ideas and
  experiences as effectively as clear ones.

- I would like to see even more emphasis on
  prevention--that we're the conduit for health as
  well as problem solving.

- Some of the sentences are difficult to follow. A
  good resource for individuals at the high school
  level, but needs more information for SACs at the
  elementary level.

- More concrete examples, i.e. what exactly happens
  in parent education meetings. At times
  repetitive, but this may be necessary to really
  make your point!

- I would clarify sections more clearly. Section V: I would be inclined to rework this section as a closing statement about what the profession has meant to you—the benefits you have received from your work.

- More "how to do", hands on, practice. More research.

- Sections I and II seem a bit wordy. Could condense and edit them a lot.

- Somewhat general in areas that could use more detail, such as concepts of Carl Rogers, systemic therapy, counseling strategies, family interventions, community relationships.

- Book was wonderful--but I wanted more! It might have been helpful to have a discussion about how marginalized or oppressed populations "adjust" to systems and how we as professionals can effectively support them in their efforts.

- More technical information would be useful; forms used, policies, how to begin groups; some real basics.

- Writing style: sentences too long.

- Some of the sentence structure is awkward.

- Section on stress: you talked about what worked for you, but you might have included other suggestions such as relaxation exercises,

jogging, Tai Chi, Yoga, painting, etc., also therapy.

- Truthfully, I can't say I found any 'weaknesses'. Having only the experience of a single internship in the high schools to rely on, I don't consider myself qualified to find or comment on any.

The third general question was: "Is there anything which should be added?" Seventeen readers responded to this question, most having positive suggestions as to something they would like added. The responses were very individual, with no particular pattern except for emergent concerns about confidentiality issues. Four people stated that they would like information about dealing with confidentiality issues and handling resistance of parents and/or staff. The readers' responses were as follows:

3. Is there anything which should be added?

- The incredible knowledge you seem to have regarding the field. I'd like to know your thoughts on how to conduct a home assessment, and what the information really means, and how to determine what should be said and what should remain private during team meetings or any meeting inside or outside the school.

- Dealing with controversial issues, i.e. confidentiality regarding parents.

- Where additional supports are found when dealing with extreme cases of systems breakdown, or am I the only one witnessing such a situation?
- I realize that it is written from a single viewpoint. I'd like to have a few more references to how it's done elsewhere as corroboration. I'd also like to hear about some mistakes made and how to anticipate what might go wrong. Also, sections need to be marked more clearly. How about an abbreviated outline of the steps you take in getting a student into a group? That could be done as part of a conclusion to that part of the handbook to reiterate the steps involved.
- When you describe what this handbook is, this may be the spot to give an overview of the handbook's purpose, but also the organization of the book so the reader knows what to expect.
- It needs a formal concluding section to summarize and, as stated earlier, more information at the elementary level.
- Needs more for elementary schools.
- It might be helpful if specific ideas were listed at the end of the text in an appendix if this were to be used as an actual handbook for publication--to make ideas available as a quick resource for a working counselor.

- It would be helpful to have information on:

  a. Sample forms, record keeping paperwork, letters to parents, and policies concerning the SAC.

  b. I would love a written resource on some technical and legal issues like: When and what kinds of rape need to be reported to whom, regarding age of the victim, statutory situations; issues around confidentiality--at what age can a person sign their own release of information, be seen in counseling centers without parental consent; issues relating to age and the need for parental permission to see the SAC.

  c. I think the SAC needs to establish a place for her/himself with the faculty and administration before too much "systems" work can go on. Taking on a few projects per year geared towards what staff identify as needs can be a way to start.

  d. Some comment on the obstacles one might face with this approach would be helpful. Some people think the SAC isn't working if not counseling. Some co-workers resent my whole school involvement; they think that the issues and programs that I take on are not in the realm of the SAC. You need to be

established before you take on more
controversial issues and have some
confidence in your ability to advocate for
necessary changes. People kid me that I
have teacher 'groupies', but without this
base of professional and personal support, I
couldn't have done what I have done.

- You may want to elaborate on "how to" deal with
resistance of staff, and/or parents especially
when it comes to seeing students without parental
consent. Also, I'd love for you to talk about
the balancing act of how to discuss a student
with staff and share enough but not so much as to
break confidentiality and how you deal with this
with students.

- More information on how to work with people who
hold contrary beliefs and practices.

- It would be helpful to have a discussion about
how SACs and other mental health professionals
might work together in ongoing ways to help a
particular student.

- More information on handling difficult situations
using examples from your own experiences.

- More emphasis on the need for SACs at every level
within the school system, i.e. elementary,
middle, and elementary schools.

- No, I think you touched on everything.

- Some newer citations in review of literature.
- At the end have a page named NOTES.
- Perhaps some more specifics on dealing with agencies such as the Department of Social Services and the courts.
- Nothing should be added. All facets of the duties of the SAC are covered in full.

The fourth question in the general questions section was: "Is there anything which should be deleted?" There were only four responses to this question, two of them suggesting that Section V would benefit from being reworked. The responses follow:

4. Is there anything that should be deleted?

- A few things that repeat at the end; what was said in initial section, such as how long you've been a counselor.
- Section V is interesting but examples become redundant.
- Section V: Don't delete, but rework and change title.
- Nothing should be deleted. All information included in the handbook is relevant to the stated topic as well as being interesting and exciting.

The last question in the general questions portion of the questionnaire was: "Would you recommend the handbook

to other professionals?" All twenty-four readers answered
this question with resounding affirmatives. Exclamation
points abounded. Several people said they were using the
book with their interns. One person said he is using the
book in a graduate level course he teaches for school
personnel. His comments were: "This book is a must for
future counselors to read. It not only is clear in
direction, but helps counselors understand why they do what
they do." Several said it should be part of the required
reading for Master's programs. Others said it should be
required for newly hired school adjustment counselors. Two
readers said they wanted their school administrators to
read the handbook. There were some unexpected responses to
the question. Two of the readers commented on a spiritual
quality which pervaded the writing. One noted that he
found spirituality in Section III on the systemic point of
view. Another commented that Section V had a spiritual
quality to it. These readers said being a reader for the
handbook had been an important and meaningful experience
for them. One said it had inspired the writing of a
personal proposal.

There was one response which was not expected but
which validated a long-standing concern of the writer. Some
of these responses were in the questionnaire while others
were in letters attached to the matrix and questionnaire.
They thank the writer for legitimizing the field. One
person said:

"I never felt quite like a real social worker, always feeling I had to apologize. You have made a case for the uniqueness of school adjustment counseling, that it can stand very much on its own. The handbook enhanced my views of myself as a school adjustment counselor."

A complete listing of all the comments as to whether readers would recommend the handbook follows:

5. Would you recommend it to other professionals?

- Yes.

- Yes.

- Yes, Yes, I'm using this handbook as a resource with my two interns, sharing your points/philosophies. Where can they get copies?

- Yes, I'd like the whole school system to know the systemic viewpoint.

- I would recommend it especially for persons in training to become SACs as it is a good nuts and bolts description. For individuals who have been SACs for awhile, I think it may offer less new and outside information, but it is nonetheless good to see how others perceive their role and how they carry out their function.

- Absolutely. Thanks for writing this manual. I've searched for a book like this often.

- Highly recommend it as part of the orientation for newly hired SACs. Good educational tool when

working with interns. Perhaps an orientation program could be developed with this book as the foundation. It is a practical reference manual. I wish I'd had it when I started as a SAC.

- I would highly recommend this handbook to other professionals as well as any lay people who are wondering what resources SACs provide and how they do it.

- Yes! For those of us interested in working in the school setting, public and private, it offers helpful suggestions. It may also be good for teachers and school administrators to read, perhaps also family outreach clinicians. The handbook was a pleasure to read.

- Yes. It seems most appropriate for school counselors as well as other primary and secondary education professionals.

- Yes! I'd like my principal to read it. I'd like all school administrators to read it. I would recommend it to SACs especially new ones.

- Yes! definitely!

- Yes!! It should be a requirement in MA M.Ed. and MSW programs for anyone who may work in schools. It's also not a bad mode for some hospitals.

- Most definitely. This book is a must for future counselors to read. It not only is clear in direction but helps counselors understand why

they do what they do. I've incorporated this
book into a graduate level course for school
personnel.

- Yes! Yes! Yes! I loved your work. I wanted more.
- Yes, I feel this handbook would be useful to new
SACs and experienced ones as well.
- Yes, very much.
- Most definitely. Some of my peers would like to
purchase the book when you print it again. It is
easy to understand, smooth reading and practical.
- Definitely. I feel this handbook would be a
welcome addition to the reading list for any
college course in Guidance Adjustment Counseling.
I hope in your dissertation you can make a case
for the U. Mass counseling program to carve a
more specific niche for school adjustment
counseling-training and certification. This book
would be ideal for these purposes.
- Yes.
- Yes-ideas very helpful-wish I had this when I
began.
- Yes, there is so much I like. For example, the
section on stress management-burnout. Your
philosophy emphasizes the mutuality of meeting
our personal needs by helping others and explains
it. Recently, I read Thomas Moore's <u>Care of the
Soul</u> and I found myself thinking how you

represent an example of this quality and
character to me.

- Most definitely. This is a great job. Every new
  SAC should receive a copy when they are hired.

In summary, the response to the handbook from all of
the readers was overwhelmingly positive. They definitely
see a need for the handbook, found it usable, and very much
subscribe to the systemic point of view which permeates the
work. There was mixed opinion about the writing style with
many readers commenting that a major strength of the book
is its readability, that it flows well. Conversely,
several readers had some criticisms of the writing style,
finding some sentences too long. Several readers, while
being very positive about the philosophy of the book, the
need for it, its systemic approach, and its specific
activities; wanted more detail, more activities and
information which would help a new or experienced school
adjustment counselor.

The final question, "Would you recommend the book to
other professionals?" sums up the rationale for the book
and the effectiveness of its fulfilling its mandate. It
received a resounding affirmative response. All
twenty-five readers said they would recommend the book to
other professionals. Many said it should be used for
training, some even saying it should be required reading
for training programs. Several said it should be part of
the orientation for newly hired school adjustment

counselors. Several experienced school adjustment
counselors said they wish they'd had this reference when
they began their careers. One said, "I've searched for a
book like this often."

Although the sample was too small to be statistically
significant, the evaluation process answered the writer's
question about the lack of a written guide for school
adjustment counselors and the need for one. The unanimous
positive response to the final question of the
questionnaire, as well as the matrix responses, and the
responses to the critical concerns speak to the need for
the handbook and to its helpfulness.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This writer, sensitive to the fact that there seemed
to be no resource book for school adjustment counseling,
decided after many years in the field to write her point of
view and some experiences in the hope that such a handbook
would be helpful for people in the field and for people
planning to enter the field. She wrote the handbook, then
solicited readers whose task would be to read the handbook
and respond to a matrix and questionnaire. Ultimately,
twenty-five readers agreed to respond to the request. They
included experienced school adjustment counselors (over two
years in the field), new school adjustment counselors
(under two years in the field), people in training to
become school adjustment counselors, school personnel in
related fields, and administrators. The readers rated each
of the chapters of the book on a matrix for various factors
and answered seven questions on a one-page questionnaire.

The responses were overwhelmingly positive.
Respondents felt that the handbook was readable and usable.
They particularly responded to the systemic point of view
and to the specific activities for students, staff and
parents. They agreed strongly with the views of Podemski
and Childers (Podemski & Childers, 1987, pp. 17-77), who
made a strong case for the counselor to view the school
from a systems perspective. The readers were in concert,
too, with the views of Shaw and Goodyear, who edited an

issue of the American Personnel and Guidance Journal, on the topic of primary prevention in the schools (Shaw & Goodyear, April 1984), particularly when these editors speak to the full delivery of counseling services needing to include primary prevention activities. The readers felt affirmed in their own beliefs.

All readers said the handbook was needed. Many said it should be required reading for all new SACs and a resource for students training to be SACs. Several readers asked for more detail, more specific information to help SACs with the many components of the job. In response to the question, "Would you recommend the handbook to other professionals?", all readers responded with resounding affirmatives.

When the writer began this process, initially as a paper for the comprehensive examination, she was very tentative as to whether it was worth doing or made any sense at all. The enthusiastic response to the original paper motivated her to continue. There were issues of confidence in oneself to deal with. The question which needed answering was--Does one person deserve to write a professional philosophy and approach to one's work and expect other people to be interested in it--or to assume it would be beneficial to others?

The answer was affirmative because of the strength of the writer's feeling about the importance of school adjustment counseling and her sense that no writing

existed. This writer had heard frequently expressed by

various colleagues that somehow school adjustment

counselors "didn't fit." They weren't really social

workers, they weren't really psychotherapists, they weren't

really guidance counselors. In fact, they weren't even

certified through the Department of Education in

Massachusetts, as are all other school personnel. She

believed when she began the position in 1973 that this was

a very significant job--that it could make a great deal of

difference in students' lives. After twenty-two years in

the field, she is even more convinced of this significance.

That is perhaps one advantage of getting older. School

adjustment counselors are in a business in which the

rewards or successes are not generally apparent

immediately. It is only over an extended period of time

that one may know if one has been successful in helping

individuals or groups. One of the most satisfying moments

in this writer's professional life occurred several years

ago when a theater program at the high school was

threatened with elimination as a result of one of the many

cost-cutting measures. Establishing a caring environment

in the school had always been a personal goal. The

chairman of the English Department at the school spoke at a

School Committee meeting in which she said, "Our school

adjustment counselor has told us for years that we are a

caring community--has always treated us with the assumption

that we are a caring community--and we have come to believe

that we are a caring community. Therefore we cannot lose our theater program. It is part of that community." This writer had no idea that this attitude had so clearly permeated the school, but how satisfying to hear that statement.

The writer was experiencing with increased intensity a need to communicate the uniqueness of this position to a larger audience. In fact, she believed, and still believes, that there is no parallel to this position and that it needed to be written about--that this would help establish and preserve its uniqueness. Certainly Rosemary Sarri and Frank Maple, when they edited their book, The School in the Community, in 1972, believed this to be true. The readers of the handbook corroborated that school adjustment counselors/social workers still feel this way and want support for this point of view as opposed to the dysfunction orientation, which has been in vogue.

The writer was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic responses of the readers of the first draft of the handbook. She made a conscious effort to solicit readers from other parts of Massachusetts to minimize the subjectivity that close proximity and personal contact might have on the responses. In these instances where the readers were known to her, she made a particular plea that they would be most helpful to the project if they could be as objective as possible--that the writer would be helped by candor. She made particular efforts to find readers who

had extensive clinical backgrounds because she suspected they might have more difficulty with her point of view. In fact, this was not the case. It was a great surprise to find unanimous support for the handbook. This writer knew there was no resource, but underestimated the widespread hunger for some writing about this position. People said they felt validated, affirmed, that someone wrote about school adjustment counseling. They commented that their own ideas and activities, which they were somewhat insecure or apologetic about, somehow now felt right. For example, the issue of therapy vs. counseling was mentioned by many readers. Many readers said they had never thought about the point that the school is a developmental, not a remedial, place and that this reality was significant to a developmental perspective for school adjustment counseling.

The writer learned much from the project. She learned from the response to the handbook that a written guide for school adjustment counselors does not exist and is desperately needed. She realized that it is needed for new school adjustment counselors and school adjustment counselors in training, but also as validation and support for experienced school adjustment counselors. For example, this writer has received nine telephone calls in the last two weeks, several from experienced school adjustment counselors, asking if and where they could buy the handbook.

She learned from the four readers who are in training to be school adjustment counselors and from the catalogues of various training programs which she solicited that there is very little training to prepare school adjustment counselors for the realities of the school setting, and there does not seem to be any writing on the subject to assist students.

She learned from the updated review of literature done for Chapter II of the dissertation that nationally there is a growing movement away from the medical model which has permeated the school adjustment counseling/social work field for the last twenty-five years to a growing interest in the systemic perspective which is addressed throughout the handbook. This writer considers prevention, developmental and systemic, roughly parallel words when speaking of the school setting. Systemic work which involves running classroom meetings, providing parent education, providing staff support, all have as their focus prevention. They all try to improve the emotional climate of the child's life. It was satisfying to see a growing interest in this approach throughout the country. The review of literature corroborated for her, as did the responses from the readers, that she is not alone; that many people in the field subscribe to her point of view.

She learned, too, that school adjustment counselors want more information. They want help with the difficult issues they face regarding confidentiality. They want help

with policies and procedures. They are anxious for more detail about working with parents and dealing with community agencies.

In short, the writer learned that the handbook is needed and appreciated, that its concepts made sense to practitioners in the field and to those people training in the field, and that people wanted even more information.

All of this has many implications for the future. The writer has decided to update and expand the handbook in response to the suggestions of readers and to prepare it for publication. It was not the intention of this handbook to include everything one needs to know to be a school adjustment counselor. As discussed in Chapter I, there was no intention to include a comprehensive survey of all of the approaches to individual counseling or group counseling.   There was no intent to include discussions of the major themes contemporary counselors must deal with such as sexual abuse, teen pregnancy, violence, family dynamics, suicide and depression, death and dying issues. The intent, stated repeatedly, was to communicate a philosophy about the position, an approach to the position, and one person's experiences in having worked systemically in a school setting. The readers seemed comfortable with not receiving information about the many specific topics listed above. None of them mentioned a need for this kind of information in their comments. They definitely appreciated the personal style of the handbook. However,

there were things they needed, areas they want expanded, and the writer will respond to their suggestions as she prepares the handbook for publication. They want more information about techniques in starting groups, in facilitating staff support groups and parent education meetings. They want a discussion of confidentiality issues and dealing with parental resistance. They asked for more information on dealing with the stress of the job. They asked for an updated review of literature.

The comments of the readers who are training to become SACs, as well as comments of readers who are practicing SACs encourage the writer that the handbook would be a helpful and effective teaching tool. SACs in training said they have had nothing like this in their coursework, that they understand the job much better having read the handbook. New and experienced SACs said they wish this handbook had been in their possession when they started their jobs. Several readers said it should be required reading in training programs or orientation programs. As stated previously in this paper, although the only copies of this handbook which the writer has disseminated are the twenty-five which the readers received, the writer has very recently received several telephone calls from practicing counselors and students wanting to obtain copies.

Regarding the matter of training, at the moment of this writing, the whole area of school adjustment counseling is at a juncture in Massachusetts. The program

has been under the auspices of the Department of Youth Services in Massachusetts since its inception. New school adjustment counselors have received their certification from one man who is in the Division of School Adjustment Counseling in the Department of Youth Services. Typically, people could not get certified until they were hired as school adjustment counselors. Applicants possessing Master's Degrees in Social Work were automatically certified. Applicants possessing master's degrees in related fields such as Counseling or Education typically had to take a seminar, usually thirty hours, to receive their certification from the Director of School Adjustment Services. At the time of this writing, he has announced his intention to retire. The Massachusetts Association of School Adjustment Counselors would like the Division of School Adjustment Counseling to be transferred from the Department of Youth Services to the Department of Education. Meetings are currently in progress on this issue. One of the matters which is being actively debated is the certification of school adjustment counselors. A central question is the training of school adjustment counselors. There has been no standard curriculum, no established practicum, no internships required for certification. The writer would hope that a revised expanded handbook might become a resource or text in a training program and that the systems approach which is advocated in the handbook would become an integral part of

the training. In the past there has been no required training which would prepare a student for dealing with the uniqueness of the school. That need was stated repeatedly by readers of the handbook, both students in training and school adjustment counselors already working in the field. Several readers stated the lack of any education in really understanding the school adjustment counselor's job; how the school differs from other social work host settings.

In addition to training of new school adjustment counselors, there is a need for ongoing in-service training and peer support for people working in the field. Several respondents to the handbook, in attached letters, as well as other colleagues throughout Massachusetts have expressed a need for on-going peer support. Perhaps this handbook could be a useful tool to groups such as these. One telephone call which the writer received requesting the handbook was from a school adjustment counselor in a small community with four school adjustment counselors. They wanted to use the handbook as a resource for ongoing meetings among themselves, to consider new ways to be more effective. The women said that their training and their functioning were very much on the medical model; that several of them were feeling frustrated; that somehow, "something was missing." They didn't feel they were effectively meeting the needs of their students and hoped the handbook might help them.

The Educational Reform Act with its plans for lengthening the school day has implications for new approaches to school adjustment counseling. In year three, 1997-98, students will no longer be able to be removed from classes for activities such as counseling. There has been much hand-wringing in recent weeks, but counselors will need to be creative, will need to think of other ways to help their students rather than the traditional techniques. There are some ideas for work in the classroom in this handbook. The writer would hope the handbook would stimulate other ideas.

It would be interesting to do research on the effectiveness of several of the possible activities included in the handbook. For example, classrooms that had classroom meetings could be studied with pre and post-test inventories to evaluate the attitudes and behaviors of students in those classrooms. This writer has always suspected that the long-term on-going counseling groups which she facilitated did have a positive impact on students staying in school, as well as decreasing their risk-taking behaviors, but the information is totally anecdotal. It would be a manageable research project to randomly select students from a pool of students, all of whom were recommended as having a potential for dropping out of school or participating in risk-taking behaviors, and recording their progress in a longitudinal study, using other students from the pool as the control group. The

writer hopes that reading the handbook will stimulate others to consider possible research studies regarding the activities and ideas in the handbook.

In conclusion, the hope of this writer in developing this handbook was as a beginning; that it would begin a dialogue; that it would begin a process of idea-sharing among the practitioners and students in a field which has many possibilities for its effective performance. This writer suspects that with the increasing need for SACs in our schools and the increasing appreciation for them, there are a tremendous number of creative ways that people are fulfilling this task. Unfortunately, there is nothing in writing. There is no journal for sharing ideas. This handbook, hopefully, will begin the process of communicating, will lead others to add to the body of knowledge, and will help the profession to respect itself as a unique and crucially important component of our schools.

APPENDIX A

PARENT EDUCATION SERIES LETTER

Dear Parents,

We often hear it said that although one of the most difficult tasks we face as adults is raising our children, it is the one for which we have the least preparation. We know that there is no step-by-step cookbook to making parenting simple; but hope that a new series of Parent Meetings which we are sponsoring may be helpful. They will be facilitated by Carole Siegel, a School Adjustment Counselor at our school.

Following is the schedule for the sessions. We encourage you to attend the entire series, but you may attend individual sessions. Please fill out and return the tear-off at the bottom of the sheet if you plan to attend.

Monday, May 8, 7:00-9:00 – PHS Guidance
Overview – Adolescent development in the context of the 1980s. Issues around transitions from middle to high school and upon leaving high school will be included.

Monday, May 15, 7:00-9:00 – PHS Guidance
Family Communication – Active listening, family meetings, limit setting responsible vs. good parenting.

Monday May 22, 7:00-9:00 – PHS Guidance
Adolescent Issues – Substance abuse, sexuality, depression/suicide

Monday, June 5, 7:00-9:00 – PHS Guidance
Building Self-Esteem – Our own and our teens.

Attendance will be limited!

William P. Coan
Principal
****

Parent Education Series

Parent Name: Phone:

Grade of son/daughter:

Any particular Issues You Would Like Included:

Please return to the Guidance Office by March 19. Call 499-9541 if you have any questions.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO READERS OF HANDBOOK

January 19, 1995

Dear

Thank you so much for being willing to give me
feedback on this Handbook for School Adjustment Counselors.
As you know, it is my dissertation project, and your
evaluation and feedback constitute "findings." So I am
personally most grateful.

I am also most appreciative of your willingness to
help me generate a handbook that is as helpful as we can
possibly make it for our colleagues in the field,
especially the new school adjustment counselors. As far as
I have been able to ascertain, there is nothing available
which deals with the scope of school adjustment counseling.
I will use your feedback to revise this draft, send you a
copy of the book if you wish, and look forward to including
your name in the acknowledgments if you are willing to
allow me to do so.

Primarily I am asking how helpful is this handbook,
what is most useful, what is not so useful. And yet, I
also need to be more specific and systematic. I really
need to know how each chapter comes across in terms of:

Clarity--How readable, easy to understand.
Relevance--Plausibility and soundness for school
adjustment counseling work.
Inclusiveness--Adequate coverage of the issues.
New Ideas--Does it add to your repertoire?
Usable--Can you see how you can use it soon? Or have
already?
New Thinking--Does it elicit new thinking?
New Actions--Does it evoke new activities for you?

I thought it would be easiest and quickest for you if
I laid out a matrix (attached) on which you could rate each
aspect of each chapter on a scale of 1 to 5:

1	=	Very poor, useless
2	=	OK (Unclear, off target, a lot missing)
3	=	Good but needs more........
4	=	Very good
5	=	Excellent

And in the last column, check if you have written comments
in the handbook or added them on a separate sheet. (These
comments are, of course, _most_ valuable for both the
dissertation and the revisions for publication.)

My hope is that the matrix will provide a quick simple way to report your evaluations and also serve as a pump primer for your thoughts and comments which you may want to add on appended pages.

There are two areas of keenest interest for me that I would like particular feedback on--Is the handbook usable? and How valuable is "systemic thinking" in our work? I have added another page with these two questions, asking for specific examples. I do hope you will have time to respond to these questions, however briefly. They are the heart of it as I see it. I also have some additional general questions for which you may provide anecdotal comments if you have any.

I need to include a brief biographical paragraph--without name--about each reader of the handbook. Could you write a brief paragraph, including your current position. Are you or have you been a school adjustment counselor? How long? Are you currently in training? If you are not a school adjustment counselor, what is your position? You may include your academic degrees, if you wish. May I use your name in the acknowledgments?

Please accept my heartiest gratitude for your contributions to this enterprise. Please call if you have any questions (413-443-5445). Forgive me for rushing you but I'll need your response by February 15 if I am to finish my dissertation in the allotted time. As you already know, this is my final extension. I've let this project go on for too long, but I haven't given up. I believe it's a project worth doing.

Thank you for all your help. I look forward to eventually producing a worthwhile manual. Your help is an invaluable part of this process.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX C

EVALUATION INPUT MATRIX

```
1 = Poor
2 = OK (unclear, off target, a lot missing)
3 = Good, but needs more work
4 = Very Good
5 = Excellent
N/A = Not Applicable
```

	Clarity	Relevance	Inclusive	New Ideas	Usable	New Thinking	New Actions	Comments
I. Introduction								
II. Background								
III. Systemic Point of View								
Activities for Students								
Activities for Staff								
Activities for Parents								
Activities for Community								
V. Dealing with the Stress of the Job								
General impression of the Handbook								

APPENDIX D

CRITICAL CONCERNS QUESTIONNAIRE

CRITICAL CONCERNS QUESTIONNAIRE

A. In what ways have you found the handbook to be usable?
    Please list and describe specific examples.

B. In what ways has the emphasis on a "system" approach
    changed and/or confirmed your own "systems thinking"
    and systemic activities or "interventions?"

Some General Questions

1. What do you consider the strengths of the
    handbook?

2. What are its weaknesses?

3. Is there anything which should be added?

4. Is there anything which should be deleted?

5. Would you recommend it to other professionals?

264

APPENDIX E

CONTENTS LISTING OF HANDBOOK

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alderson, J. J. (1972). Models of School Social Work Practice. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), <u>The school in the Community</u>. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Allport, G. (1962). Psychological models for guidance. <u>Harvard Educational Review</u>, <u>2</u>, 373-381.

Aspy, D. (1972). <u>Toward a technology for humanizing education</u>. Illinois: Research Press.

Aspy, D., & Roebuck, F. M. (1976). <u>A lever long enough</u>. Washington, DC: National Consortium for Humanizing Education.

Bandura, A. (1977). <u>Social learning theory</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1986). <u>Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1959). <u>Adolescent aggression</u>. New York, NY: Ronald Press Co.

Bateman, G. (1971). The cybernetics of self: A theory of alcoholism. <u>Psychiatry</u>, 34.

Berlin, I. N. (1977). Preventive aspects of mental health consultation to schools. In J. Meyers, R. Martin, & I. Human (Eds.), <u>School consultation: Readings about preventive techniques for pupil personnel workers</u> (pp. 211-221). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.

Bettleheim, B. (1988). <u>A good enough parent</u>. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Bierman, R. (Ed.). (1976). <u>Toward meeting fundamental human needs: Preventive effects of the human service community</u>. Guelph: Human Service Community, Inc.

Binder, V., & Rimland, B. (Eds.). (1976). <u>Modern therapies</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Braverman, J. (1976). The school system as the vehicle of preventive psychiatry. <u>Journal of Public Health</u>, 67.

Brenner, A. (1984). <u>Helping children cope with stress</u>. Washington, DC: Heath and Co.

Briggs, D. C. (1989). <u>Your child's self-esteem</u>. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co.

Brooks, R. (1991). <u>The self-esteem teacher</u>. Circle
    Pines, MN: American Guidance Service, Inc., Freehaus
    Communications, Inc.

Burnard, P. (1989). <u>Counseling skills for health
    professionals</u>. London: Chapman and Hall.

Canfield, J., & Willis, H. C. (1976). <u>100 ways to enhance
    self-concept in the classroom</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ:
    Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Caplan, C., & Grunebaum, H. (1967). Perspectives on
    primary prevention, a review. <u>Archives in General
    Psychiatry</u>, <u>17</u>.

Carr, L. W. (1976). <u>Summary of preliminary report on the
    survey of social workers in the schools</u>. Washington,
    DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Carter, B., & McDoldinck, M. (Eds.). (1988). <u>The
    changing family life cycle</u>. New York: Garden Press.

Charney, R. S. (1992). <u>Teaching children to care,
    management in the responsive classroom</u>. Boston, MA:
    Northeast Foundation for Children<u>.</u>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (1984). Children's mental
    health services. In <u>Interim report of special
    committee on mental health</u>. Boston, MA: Author.

Costin, L. B. (19xx). An analysis of the tasks in school
    social work. <u>Social Services Review</u>, <u>43</u>.

Costin, L. B. (1972). Social work contribution to
    education in transition. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple
    (Eds.), <u>The school in the community</u>. Washington, DC:
    NASW, Inc.

Costin, L. B. (1975). School social work practice: A new
    model. <u>Social Work</u>, <u>20</u>.

Costin, L. B. (1981). School social work as specialized
    practice. <u>Social Work</u>, <u>26</u>.

Couchman, R. (1980). The unrealized resource: Impact of
    the school on children's mental health. <u>The School
    Guidance Worker</u>, <u>35</u>(6).

Dickel, C. T., et al. (1992). <u>Creating a preventive
    school</u>. Paper presented at the Conference of the
    American School Counselor Association, Albuquerque.

Dinkmeyer, D. C., & Muro, J. J. (1971). <u>Group counseling:</u>
<u>Theory and practice</u>. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock
Publishers, Inc.

Drew, N. (1987). <u>Learning the skills of peacemaking</u>.
Rolling Hills Estates, CA: Jalman Press.

Edelman, M. W. (1987). <u>Families in peril, an agenda for</u>
<u>social change</u>. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
Press.

Elkind, D. (1984). <u>All grown up and no place to go.</u>
<u>Teenagers in crisis</u>. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley
Publishing Company.

Ellis, A., & Harper, R. A. (1975). <u>A new guide to</u>
<u>rational living</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,
Inc.

Erikson, E. H. (1950, 1963). <u>Childhood and society</u>. New
York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). <u>Identity: Youth and crisis</u>. New
York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc.

Faber, A., & Mezlish, E. (1982). <u>How to talk so kids will</u>
<u>listen and listen so kids will talk</u>. New York, NY:
Avon Books.

Flynn, E. W., & LaFaso, J. F. (1974). <u>Designs in</u>
<u>affective education</u>. New York, NY: Paulist Press<u>.</u>

Fugit, E. D. (1983). <u>He hit me back first</u>. Rolling Hills
Estates, CA: Jalman Press.

Galbraith, R., & Jones, T. (1976). <u>Moral reasoning</u>.
Minneapolis, MN: Greenhouse Press, Inc.

Gardner, R. A. (1990). The American educational system
and the psychological development of the adolescent.
<u>Adolescent Psychiatry</u>, <u>17</u>. (Special edition by
Sherman C. Feinstein, University of Chicago Press:
Chicago).

Geller, E. R., Jr. (1976). New directions for school
counseling. <u>School Counselors</u>, <u>23</u>, 247-251.

Gibbs, M. S., Lockenmeyer, J., & Sigal, J. (1980).
<u>Community psychology</u>. New York, NY: Gardner Press,
Inc.

Gilman, S. (1981). <u>Preventative mental health programs and school systems</u>. Ottawa: Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Board of Education, Department of Natural Health and Welfare.

Gilman, S. (1981). <u>Preventative mental health programs and school systems: A review of the literature</u> (Educational Document ED 214 073). Ottawa, Ontario; Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Board of Education, Department of Natural Health and Welfare.

Glasser, W. (1965). <u>Reality therapy</u>. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Glasser, W. (1968). <u>Schools without failure</u>. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Golann, S. E. (1975). <u>Current and future trends in community psychology</u>. New York, NY: Human Sciences Press.

Goodlad, J. L. (1984). <u>A place called school</u>. New York, NY: McGraw Hill Book Company.

Gordon, S., & Gordon, J. (1983). <u>Raising a child conservatively in a sexually permissive world</u>. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Gordon, T. (1973). <u>Parent effectiveness training</u>. New York, NY: Peter H. Wyden, Inc.

Gottlieb, B. H., & Gottlieb, L. J. (1971). An expanded role for the school social worker. <u>Social Work</u>, <u>16</u>.

Gum, M. (1979). Training for developmental guidance in elementary schools. <u>Pupil Personnel Services Journal</u>, <u>8</u>, 187-194.

Haley, J. (1980). <u>Leaving home</u>. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Haley, J., & Hoffman, L. (1967). <u>Techniques of family therapy</u>. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Holt, J. (1964). <u>How children fail</u>. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Company.

Holt, J. (1967). <u>How children learn</u>. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Company.

Howe, L. W., & Howe, M. M. (1975). <u>Personalizing education</u>. New York, NY: Hart Publishing Company, Inc.

Ibrahim, F., & Thompson, D. (1982). Preparation of secondary school counselors: A national survey. Counselor Education and Supervision, 22, 113-131.

James, B. (1989). Treating traumatized children: New insights and creative interventions. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company.

Jarisch, R. (1978). Facilitative dimensions in interpersonal relations: Verifying the theoretical assumptions of Carl Rogers. College Student Journal, 12(1), 2-11.

Jones, M. D., & Stewart, N. R. (1980). Helping the environment help the client: A sequenced change process. The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 58(8).

Kahn, A. J. (1972). The schools: Social change and social welfare. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), The school in the community. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Kreidler, W. J. (1984). Creative conflict resolution. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Kreidler, W. J. (1990). Elementary perspectives, Teaching concepts of peace and conflict. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility.

Kreidler, William J. (1994). Conflict resolution in the middle school. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility.

Levin, D. E. (1994). Teaching young children in violent times. Cambridge, MA: Educators for Social Responsibility.

Levine, B. (1979). Group psychotherapy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lewis, J. A., & Lewis, M. D. (1977). The counselor's impact on community environments. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 55.

Leirford, R., & Caison, P. (1980). The adolescent passage. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Lorion, R. P., Caldwell, R. A., & Cowen, E. (1976). Effects of a school mental health project: A one-year follow-up. Journal of School Psychology, 14(1).

Madanes, C. (1981). Strategic family therapy. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Magall, R. S. (1974). The school social worker and the community school. Social Casework.

Marburger, C. (1972). Social work contributions and present educational needs. In R C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), The school in the community. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Massachusetts Department of Correction. (1990, May). Systemic school change: A comprehensive approach to raising achievement and keeping students in school. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Correction, Bureau of Student Development and Health.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (1990). Changing schools and communities: A systemic approach to dropout prevention. Boston, MA: Author.

Massachusetts Department of Education. (1992). Everyone's guide to peer counseling, resources for schools. Boston, MA: Author.

Minuchin, S. (1974). Families and family therapy. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Molnar, A., & Lindquist, B. (1989). Changing problem behavior in schools. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc.

Morrow, G. (1987). The compassionate school. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Nadelson, C. C. (1989). Teenagers in distress. In S. C. Feinstein (Ed.), Adolescent psychiatry (Vol. 16). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

National Association of Social Workers. (1978). Standards for social services in schools (Policy statement). Washington, DC: Author.

Niebel, H. R. (1972). Breaking out of the bind in school social work practice. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), The school in the community. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

O'Connell, V., & O'Connell, A. (1974). Choice and change. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

O'Hanlon, W., & Weiner-Davis, M. (1989). In search of solutions. A new direction in psychotherapy. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.

Palazzoli, M. S., Boscolo, L., Cecchin, G., & Prata, G. (1981). Paradox and counterparadox. New York, NY: Jason Aronson.

Parolek, E. J. (1972). Labeling theory and school social work. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple, (Eds.), The school in the community. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Podemski, R. S., & Childers, J. H., Jr. (1980). The counselor as change agent: An organizational analysis. School Counselor, 27, 168-174.

Podemski, R. S., & Childers, J. H., Jr. (1987). The school counselor's role: Reexamination and revitalization. Planning and Changing, 18(1), 17-22.

Popkin, M. (1987). Active parenting. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishing Company.

President's Commission on Mental Health. (1978). Report of the Task Panel on Prevention (Vol. 4). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Prutzman, P., et al. (19xx). The friendly classrooms for a small planet. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Rapoport, A. (1975). Modern systems theory--an outlook for coping with change. In B. D. Ruben & J. Y. Kim (Eds.), General systems theory and human communications. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, Inc.

Reidin, N. (1975). A personal perspective on school social work. Social Casework.

Roberts, R. D. (1970). Perceptions of actual and desired role functions of school psychologists and teachers. Psychology in the Schools, 7.

Robinson, B. E. (1989). Working with children of alcoholics. New York, NY: Lexington Books.

Robinson, L. H. (1990). In defense of parents. In S. C. Feinstein (Ed.), Adolescent psychiatry (Vol. 17). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rosebaum, J., & Rosebaum, V. (1980). Living with teenagers. New York, NY: Stein and Day.

Ruben, B. D., & Kim, J. Y. (1975). General systems theory and human communication. Rochelle Park, NJ: Hayden Book Company, Inc.

Rutter, M., et al. (1979). Fifteen thousand hours. Secondary schools and their effects on children. London: Open Books.

Sarason, S. B. (1977). The psychological sense of community. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Sarri, R. C. (1972). Education in transition. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), The school in the community. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Satir, V. (1972). Peoplemaking. Palo Alto, CA: Science and Behavior Books, Inc.

Schmuck, R. A., & Schmuck, P. A. (1974). A humanistic psychology of education: Making the school everybody's house. Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books (pp. 59-70).

Schmuck, R. A. (1982). Organization development in the schools. In C. R. Reynolds & T. B. Gutkin (Eds.), Handbook of school psychology. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Schwartz, W., & Zalba, S. (1971). The practice of group work. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Scileppi, J. A. (1984). A systems view of education. New York, NY: University Press of New York.

Shaffer, J. B..P., & Golinsky, M. D. (1974). Models of group therapy and sensitivity training. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Shaw, M. C., & Goodyear, R. K. (Eds.). (1984). Prologue to primary prevention in schools. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 6(8), 491-495.

Shemsie, S. (1982). Antisocial adolescents: Our treatments do not work--Where do we go from here? In S. Chess & A. Thomas (Eds.), Psychiatry and child development. New York, NY: Brunner/Mezel.

Simon, S. B., Howe, L., & Kerschenbaum, H. (1972). Values clarification. New York, NY: Hart Publishing Company.

Singer, D. L., Whaton, M. B., & Matthew, F. (1970). An alternative to traditional mental health services and consultation in schools: A social systems and group process approach. Journal of School Psychology, 8(3).

Sprinthall, N. (1977). New directions for school and counseling psychology. Counseling Psychologist, 6(4), 53-57.

Sprinthall, N. (1981). A new model for research in the service of guidance and counseling. <u>Personnel and Guidance Journal</u>, <u>58</u>, 487-494.

Sprinthall, N. (1984). Primary prevention: A road paved with a plethora of premises and procrastinations. <u>Personnel and Guidance Journal</u>, <u>68</u>, 491-495.

Stott, D. H. (1982). <u>Helping the maladjusted child</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Stuart, R. B. (1972). Behavior modification techniques for the education technologist. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), <u>The school in the community</u>. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Watzlawick, P. (1978). <u>The language of change</u>. New York, NY: Basic Books, Inc.

Watzlawick, P., Beavin, J. H., & Jackson, D. (1967). <u>Pragmatics of human communication</u>. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.

Watzlawick, P., Weakland, J. H., & Fisch, R. (1974). <u>Change. Principles of problem formation and problem resolution</u>. New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company.

Webster, I., & Heyland, J. (1982). <u>Evaluation report: Elementary school mental health report</u>. Ottawa: Co-sponsored by Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottowa-Carleton Branch and Ottawa Board of Education, Project 6606-1878.

Willis, J. W. (1972). The mental health work as a systems behavioral engineer. In R. C. Sarri & F. Maple (Eds.), <u>The school in the community</u>. Washington, DC: NASW, Inc.

Wilson, W. H., & Rotter, J. C. (1982). School counseling: A look into the future. <u>Personnel and Guidance Journal</u>, <u>60</u>, 353-356.

Wittman, M. (1961). Preventive social work: A goal for practice and education. <u>Social Work</u>,.

Wonderley, D. M., & Jessie, S. C. (19xx). Prevention: Systems intervention (PS.I), an alternative model for school psychology. <u>School Psychology Digest</u>, <u>3</u>(4).

Young, B. B. (1992). <u>The six vital ingredients of self-esteem</u>. Rolling Hills estates, CA: Jalman Press.