

SCHOOL COUNSELOR CONSULTATION

Second Edition

Skills for Working
Effectively with
Parents, Teachers,
and Other
School Personnel

GREG BRIGMAN • ELIZABETH VILLARES • FRAN MULLIS • LINDA D. WEBB • JOANNA F. WHITE

WILEY

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*Greg Brigman, Elizabeth Villares, Fran Mullis, Linda D.
Webb, and JoAnna F. White*

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Foreword

This text on school counselor consultation is as timely as it is helpful. The publication of the second edition comes on the heels of the global COVID-19 pandemic and other discontent tied to myriad forms of societal inequity and injustice. Current circumstances exasperate long-standing inadequacies in our various social institutions and further illustrate how essential schools can be for a great number of people. While schools are intended to be a hub for learning and social advancement, often school environments can further perpetuate the types of personal and social ineffectuality that limit individual and collective growth. Consultation services offered by school counselors cannot possibly exceed the total threats to students, schools, or entire social systems, but this approach to school counseling can offer tangible practice behaviors that can support the individual student and total school alike.

As consultant, a school counselor generally provides an indirect service to one or more third party individuals (consultees) who will later put into use the content of the consultation session(s). It is assumed that the consultee will develop some type of appreciable skill, which will in turn be embodied by the consultee in a manner that will positively affect a student or group of students. This way of professional practice is more systemic and ecological in nature. The school counselor as consultant has amplified one's reach, as the consultee will certainly interact with a great variety of students over long periods of time.

The brand of school counseling consultation proffered in this text is consistent with the best practices across a variety of disciplines. In this book, Brigman and colleagues suggest that school counselor adopt a "tell, show, do,

coach” approach. To tell is not simply didactic advice giving. Instead, a consultant inspired by this approach considers the presenting topic, the unique needs and qualities associated with the consultee, and the cultural character of the situation. Once these constituent ingredients are thoroughly considered, the school counselor consultant articulates (“tells”) the qualities associated with the circumstance. To tell in consultation also includes exposure to the necessary *prior knowledge* for success. Stated plainly, rather than the school counselor telling the consultee what to do (based on the school counselor’s perspective), the school counselor draws from a larger ecology of wisdom and helps express it in an actionable manner.

The steps of showing and doing in consultation are also consistent with this systems- focused approach to school counseling practice. Showing is not simply some top-down “let me show you how it is done” overture, rather, the intent is to both model possible alternatives and instill a sense of flexibility across varying possibilities. Too often, events that transpire in a school feel habitual or disempowering; through showing, the school counselor as consultant exposes how happenings in school are both personally relevant and yet unsentimental. In kind, what is exposed as one of many possibilities in the showing portion invites the consultee to try on each of the various possibilities in the doing activities. The distancing necessary to break old rigid beliefs and behaviors now returns to the consultee in the doing phase in a way that is relevant to what one can do in a school and the qualities of the school environment.

Finally, the coaching portion of this consultation practice is as pivotal as the other ingredients. An effective coach encourages the consultee to implement and adjust using one’s wherewithal as necessary. A coach has helped the

individual prepare in advance, but continues to support and strategize, with the consultee as the predictable and unpredictable manifest in a school.

In addition to the “tell, show, do, coach” motif used throughout the text are the incredibly helpful skills checklists, experiential activities, and examples through cases or workshops. In this way, the text itself mirrors the philosophical position of “tell, show, do, coach”—that is, readers are presented with the important prior knowledge about consultation practices, they are shown examples and encouraged to try out hypothetical examples, and throughout the text, they are offered ongoing encouragement to be best consultants possible!

This textual consistency is augmented by six new chapters compared to the original edition of this book. These six chapters provide deeper explication of the philosophic underpinnings of this type of consultation and offer other specific case examples customary to contemporary school counseling.

This second edition of this consultation text fits within a larger suite of school counseling practices promulgated by Brigman and his many collaborators (e.g., *Student Success Skills, Ready to Learn*). These other approaches tend to focus first on how a school counselor can intervene with a particular student such that they can actualize the student’s potential. While the student focus is clear, in these works it is also evident that school counselors must expose the content to the various adults in the lives of students. This book on school counselor consultation inverts this focus while maintaining continuity in the belief that any student change must be complimented with changes at the school system level. The importance of this philosophic and practice position cannot be undersold. Schools are complex networks of individuals, and they only

thrive when as many individuals are empowered to support and share in their collective successes.

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Introduction and Overview

Building Consultation Skills

An Application-Learning Model

Counselors entering schools should be prepared to support the school's academic mission by promoting and enhancing the learning process. To accomplish this goal, counselors need the knowledge and skills that allow them to facilitate the personal/social, career, and academic growth of students through interventions with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. These interventions include individual and group counseling, classroom guidance, and consultation and are part of a balanced comprehensive developmental guidance program. Consultation, as a counselor intervention, is the focus of this text. An application-learning model is used to develop skills in two primary areas: case consultation and workshop presentation.

Preparation for Consultative Role

State and national agencies that oversee counselor preparation have recognized the need for consultative skills to be well developed, as large numbers of students can be impacted through work with parents, teachers, and administrators. Both the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (2019) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2016) include consultation as a key component of a comprehensive school counseling program. We believe consultation is an essential component with specific skills that can be used to make a difference with students through working with the adults who are charged with their learning and development.

Goals for this Text

Our goal for this text is to provide a framework for a hands-on approach to developing the knowledge and skills school counselors need to function as effective consultants in schools. A foundation is laid through the introduction of theory, consulting approaches, and their application in school settings. An increased integration of theory and practice is offered through an experiential approach to developing competence as a consultant to parents, teachers, and administrators. After reading and participating in the skill-training exercises detailed in this text, school counselors will have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively deliver consultation as one of the interventions supporting increased learning opportunities for students. This appendix provides an overview of some of the techniques and strategies that have been used in course delivery, as well as some sample activities used to support learning, as school counselors build an ongoing base of knowledge and integrate consultative skills into their school counselor roles.¹

“Tell, Show, Do, Coach” Model

Teaching the consultative process involves building a knowledge base, and introducing the necessary skills to facilitate that process. We believe that Bandura’s social-learning theory is the most effective way to provide comprehensive training in consultation (Bandura, 1977). This “tell, show, do, coach” model provides opportunities to learn about the consultation process; see consultation skills demonstrated; practice delivering both case consultation and group consultation (workshops); and receive both supportive and corrective feedback as part of the course, culminating with opportunities for school counselors to demonstrate their ability to integrate their knowledge base with initial mastery of consultative skills, later during their internship. This increases confidence and the likelihood that counselors will be able to effectively facilitate the consultative process in their schools.

Tell

The “tell” portion of the course begins with general information about consultation. A brief history of school consultation, an overview of the consultative process, and a differentiation between consultation and counseling will help to orient school counselors to consultation in general and introduce them to issues that have ethical ramifications. Information about the different approaches to consultation is also provided.

As school counselors are demonstrating consultative skills throughout the course, they can also contribute to this “tell” part of the model, as they provide well-researched information on topics frequently emerging during consultation. Specific topics such as child abuse, loss, violence prevention, and changing families can be addressed, along with information about appropriate resources and interventions.

Show/Do

Two important skillsets to develop during this course are case consultation skills and workshop-presentation skills. The process of observing these skills being used in context and practicing the skills during class speeds skill acquisition and deepens understanding. By practicing in small groups, school counselors have the opportunity to see multiple models for these two important skillsets, as well as several core skills such as listening, attending, providing feedback, and eliciting input and information. A structured guide is provided for both the case consultation and the workshop. This guide is incorporated into the feedback forms used by observers, as shown in [Tables I.1](#) and [I.2](#).

Table I.1 Case Consultation Feedback Form.

Graduate student's name: _____					
Rater's name: _____ Date of review: _____ Focus of consultation: _____					
Please rate each of the following categories:					
	<i>Lowest</i>		<i>Highest</i>		
<i>Before Consultation</i>					
Evidence of PR review, information from parents, teachers	1	2	3	4	5
<i>During Consultation</i>					
1. Structure meeting—time, topic, process	1	2	3	4	5
2. Start with positives/strengths	1	2	3	4	5
3. Clarify problem in concrete behavioral terms including duration and frequency	1	2	3	4	5
4. Clarify goal of consultation in behavioral terms	1	2	3	4	5
5. Clarify everything that has been tried and results—include examples and child's reaction to intervention and adult's emotional reaction	1	2	3	4	5
6. Mistaken Goal of student behavior identified (attention, power, revenge, avoidance of failure)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Clarify what client thinks might work	1	2	3	4	5
8. Gather missing information: peer relations, academic strengths/weaknesses, academic and peer performance of siblings, relationship to parents and siblings	1	2	3	4	5
9. Recommendations/suggestions offered as additional alternatives for client to consider—put client in role of expert to evaluate suggestion	1	2	3	4	5
10. Encouragement for student and parent /teacher built in	1	2	3	4	5
11. Commitment to implement plan obtained	1	2	3	4	5
12. Follow-up meeting/phone conference set	1	2	3	4	5
I liked: (strengths of consultation)					
Suggestions for improvement:					

Table I.2 Feedback to Workshop Facilitators.

Title of workshop:_____
Name of workshop facilitator:_____
Person providing feedback:_____
Please provide the following information with regard to your experience.
<i>Warm-Up</i>
The “warm-up” helped me get into the topic and got me ready to get involved. Example/Comments:
<i>Ask before Telling</i>
I was asked to share some of my own ideas before information was presented. Example/Comments:
<i>Personalize and Practice</i>
As information was shared, I was asked to think about, write, or share some of my own experiences as related to the topic at hand. I was given an opportunity to practice what I was learning. Example/Comments:
<i>Process and Summarize</i>
At the end of the session, I was asked to reflect on my involvement in the workshop and how I will use what I have learned or relearned. Example/Comments:
<i>Evaluate</i>
I was asked for feedback about the effectiveness of the workshop in reaching targeted outcomes. Example/Comments:
The most effective workshop strategy I experienced today was:
Something I might suggest for next time:_____

Coach

Use of the *Peer Coaching Model for Feedback* (Brigman & Campbell, 2002) is encouraged to support and speed skill development. Peer coaching not only helps the school counselor evaluate skill development but also allows the participants to identify particularly effective strategies while strengthening their own learning process. The peer-coaching model has been found to be very useful in providing feedback that allows for self-reflection and input from others while maintaining a positive focus.

The following steps are used to facilitate the peer-coaching process after a demonstration of the case consultation model or a workshop presentation:

1. One of the participants (not the school counselor who led the workshop or demonstration of case consultation) will facilitate a process that begins by giving participants a few moments to complete their notes and ratings for the presentation, so that the presenter can consider whether what they did was helpful, useful, and/or particularly effective.
2. The workshop/demonstration presenter is then asked by the facilitator to share what they thought was done effectively. It is important for the facilitator to stop the presenter if negatives are mentioned at this point.
3. The presenter is asked if they would like to hear other effective skills that were noticed by participants. Participants share what they have noted on their written feedback sheet.
4. Next, the presenter shares what could be done differently next time to make the workshop or consultation even better. After sharing these proposed changes, the presenter is asked if they would like to hear suggestions from others.
5. Participants share suggestions. After giving suggested changes, each group member concludes with a positive comment about the experience.
6. Group members give their written feedback sheets to the workshop presenter.

Case Consultation with Parents/Teachers: Building Your Skills

Emphasis is placed on building the skills needed to engage in effective consultative experiences with parents and teachers. After receiving an overview of the model and observing specific skill demonstrations, school counselors are given the opportunity to practice their new consultation skills in triads. One person in each group plays the role of the consultant, another plays the role of parent or teacher, and the third person is the observer. Each triad member has the chance to play all roles.

After each practice consultation, feedback is provided using the “peer-coaching” model. The observer facilitates the feedback process. Tasks to be taught, demonstrated, and practiced are found on the “Case Consultation Feedback Form” (see [Table I.1](#)) and include:

Before the Consultation

- setting up and preparing for the consultation

During the Consultation

- structuring the meeting
- developing the relationship

- identifying strengths and potential strengths
- clarifying behaviors
- making goals specific
- identifying interventions
- developing plans for improvement and follow-up

After the Consultation

- follow-up of consultation

Workshop Presentation

Each school counselor develops a workshop that demonstrates knowledge of a specific content area to include extent of the problem, behaviors that impact school success, strategies that might be shared with teachers and parents, recommended resources, as well as knowledge of workshop development. The workshop presenter provides a workshop outline (following the format provided in [Chapter 7](#)) and copies of any handouts or activities used to facilitate the workshop experience to each class member. Background information, resources for parents and teachers, along with this outline, provide content, as well as a framework, for other school counselors to use to prepare workshops in their own schools.

School counselors develop workshop fliers or brochures to promote their presentation. Participants in teacher education courses who may be interested in one or more of the topics could be invited to attend. This creates a more field-based experience, as school counselors are extending their experiences beyond their counselor education peer group. Following the workshop, presenters are provided feedback using the peer-coaching model and using the “Feedback to Workshop Facilitators Form” (see [Table I.2](#)).

Sample Workshop Titles

- Setting students up for success.
- Helping students manage test anxiety.
- Stress management for teachers.
- Family friendly schools.
- Bully proofing.
- Sexual harassment.
- Building safe and friendly schools.
- Helping students have a successful transition.
- Conflict management.
- Creating a caring, supportive, and encouraging classroom community.

- Motivating low achieving students.
- Strategies for helping ADHD students learn.
- Using classroom meetings to support a positive climate.
- Cognitive skills to improve student learning.
- Brain-friendly activities that promote learning and cooperation.

Additional Activities to Support the Text

In addition to case consultation and workshop practice and feedback activities, the following activities provide additional opportunities to build a knowledge base and develop the skills needed for competent consultation: (a) three-part resource collection that supplements the counseling student's workshop topic, and (b) school-based observation of a school counselor facilitating a team of professionals.

Three-Part Resource Collection to Supplement Workshop Topic

School counselors develop a resource guide to be shared with peers. The resource collection provides these students the opportunity to increase their familiarity with professional journals and a host of other resources that help to build their knowledge base, making them more effective as counselors and consultants. School counselors develop a paper, resource collection, and book review to support their workshop. This three-part collection (on a single topic) is shared with peers, providing each person with a collection of resources and information from which they can draw as they continue through the program and into their own professional settings. The expectation is that this kind of development and sharing continues as counselors enter their own schools. See suggested workshop topics in the previous section for focus of "Three-Part Collection."

Paper: Building Knowledge and Resources

School counselors select one of the topics frequently addressed through consultation in the schools. A sample five-part format for the paper is: (1) describe the extent of the problem; (2) detail the behavioral characteristics frequently exhibited by students (especially those that might impact school success); (3) explain the counselor's role as a consultant working with this issue; (4) provide suggested strategies for teachers/parents working with students exhibiting these behaviors; and (5) reflect on conclusions drawn by the student about their ability to be effective working as a consultant in this area.

Resource Collection: Building Knowledge and Resources

School counselors explore and evaluate resources within their chosen topic area. Resources should include professional books or journals, materials available for parents, materials available for teachers, community resources, and internet sites. Each entry includes a brief annotation as to the intended audience and what the resource might provide. Sources for obtaining the resources should also be included.

Book Review: Building Knowledge and Resources

School counselors review one of the books on their resource list from the popular literature that is meant to be read by parents. This review includes complete bibliographic information, a general synopsis of the book as well as specific contributions—what particular knowledge, insights, skills, or strategies can be gained from reading the book. Reviewers are asked to give examples as well as recommendations for using this book as a resource for parents.

School-Based Observation: Facilitating a Team of Professionals

School counselors-in-training meet with a school counselor to arrange an opportunity to observe a consultative experience with a team of professionals. Tasks are to notice those strategies/skills that contribute toward the meeting of the consultative goals, to write-up observations, and share the experience with peers. The write-up includes the *purpose/goal(s) of the consultation* (determined prior to the actual consultation); *who was present* (titles only); and *what took place before, during, and after the team meeting that was aimed at reaching the goal(s)*. The *logistics of setting up the consultation* as well as *follow-through plans* are also noted. School counselors-in-training are asked to notice the *role of the school counselor* in the team meeting process and *how interactions and contributions are facilitated* among the group members. Particular note should be taken of the school counselor's leadership role in the meeting.

The final part of the write-up examines what went well and things they might do differently or strategies they might have included that may have contributed to the effectiveness of the consultation. This is not meant to be evaluative, but is a chance for counseling students to demonstrate knowledge of the process and what might have been particularly effective or missing.

Survey Results

We have used the activities described in the previous section and found that they have produced consistent results. Recently surveyed students in the school counseling program overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed (95% to 100%) with a series of statements reflecting their positive experience using this experiential skill- and knowledge-building approach. The self-assessment (see [Table I.3](#)) included rating knowledge and skills in the use of the consultative process with teachers, parents, and administrators; planning and delivering teacher or parent workshops; facilitating team meetings; evaluating knowledge of student behavior and appropriate intervention strategies, as well as building a resource base concerning a wide range of student issues and concerns for use with parents and teachers.

Table I.3 Self-Assessment of Consultation Knowledge and Skills.

Mark the Likert-type scale to indicate where you see yourself with regard to the following knowledge and skills.					
	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Unsure</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
I have knowledge and understanding of the consultative process.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the knowledge and skills to plan and deliver a teacher workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the knowledge and skills to plan and deliver a parent workshop.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the knowledge and skills to facilitate the consultative process with teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the knowledge and skills to facilitate the consultative process with parents.	1	2	3	4	5
I have the knowledge and skills to organize and facilitate team meetings (child study).	1	2	3	4	5
I have knowledge of student behavior (causes and intervention strategies).	1	2	3	4	5
I have started to collect information about resources concerning a wide range of student issues/concerns for use with parents/teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
Continue your assessment by responding to the following:					
• I have provided copies of each assignment to all class members (hard copy or electronic copy).			Yes	No	
• I plan to continue to expand my knowledge base about children/adolescent issues and strategies for intervention by: _____ _____ _____ _____					
Other comments:					

School counselors, as behavior and relationship specialists in their schools, can help others to work more effectively with students through consultation (Myrick, 2003). The models and supporting theories presented in this text, along with the kinds of activities suggested, can be used to deliver an experience that will prepare school counselors for their consultative role.

Notes

- [1.](#) The model discussed can be used with preservice school counselors in university programs, as well as with in-service school counselors who seek to review or enhance their consultation skills. To avoid confusion, the term *school counselor* will be used to refer to both preservice and in-service school counselors.

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