

Person-Centered Counseling and Solution-Focused Brief Therapy:

An Integrative Model for School Counselors

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Abstract

Increasing demands upon the time of the professional school counselor combined with the call by the American School Counselor Association to provide direct services to students may lead many in the profession to wonder from what theoretical standpoint(s) they can best meet these lofty goals. I propose a two phase approach combining person-centered counseling with solution-focused brief therapy as a concrete, functional method to address student counseling needs within the school setting.

Keywords: Rogerian, person-centered, solution-focused brief therapy, school counseling

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In finding a word to describe school counseling, overwhelming is not a term we hope to associate with our chosen profession. However, when Kendrick, Chandler, and Hatcher (1994) surveyed 245 school counselors in North Carolina to evaluate their job stressors, results indicated that the weight of their job demands was the top stressor experienced by this group of practitioners. In fact, 91% reported that they feel overwhelmed by expectations at work. This study seems to indicate that school counselors often feel inundated by their professional duties. How, then, can school counselors practice individual counseling with students in the midst of their daily job demands and what theories should they draw upon to best meet student needs?

Mostert, Johnson, and Mostet (1997) point out that graduate training, clinical experiences, and personal fit are all elements that affect school counselors' choice of counseling model. Sklare (2005) summarizes a particularly salient issue for newly-graduated school counselors. He points out that counselor education programs traditionally place emphasis on theories of counseling that involve longer-term therapy than school counselors either have time to perform or that other stakeholders desire for students. How, then, can burgeoning school counselors utilize the skills acquired through the programs from which they recently matriculated while matching the needs of their individual students and employing schools?

The Role of the School Counselor

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) provides both a role statement for school counselors and national model that details standards to which the

association contends school counselors should aspire (ASCA n.d.; ASCA, 2012). The ASCA National Model is comprised of four components: (a) the foundation, (b) management, (c) delivery, and (d) accountability (ASCA, 2012). According to the model, 80% or more of a school counselor's time should be spent on either indirect or direct student services (ASCA, 2012). In 2012, ASCA defined direct services as, "in-person interactions between school counselors and students. Through the direct services . . . school counselors help students develop in the knowledge, attitudes, and skills identified from the school counseling core curriculum" (p. 83).

Additionally, ASCA (2012) provides a description of what counseling should look like as a responsive service for students. Counseling, the model states, should be planned, goal-focused, and short term in nature. The model explains that it is not the job of the school counselor to provide long-term counseling to address psychological disorders. Rather, the model and role statement describe counseling as a responsive service within the school setting. This service entails assisting students' immediate concerns and needs by helping them overcome issues that impede success or achievement, aiding them in identifying problems, and helping students recognize alternatives and possible consequences that will lead to appropriate decisions and actions. When appropriate, school counselors make referrals to outside agencies if a student needs long-term therapy or treatment of a psychological disorder (ASCA, 2012).

Ideal vs. Actual School Counseling Duties

The ASCA National Model proposes a comprehensive model to which newly trained and practiced school counselors can aspire. Research indicates, however, that there is discrepancy between national standards and the actual work activities

conducted by school counselors (Foster, Young, & Hermann, 2005; Kendrick, Chandler, & Hatcher, 1994; Mostert, Johnson, and Mostert, 1997; Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, & Jones, 2004). Foster, Young, and Hermann (2005) conducted a national survey in order to examine the actual work activities performed by school counselors and the alignment of these activities to the national standards for school counseling programs (NSSCP). The researchers concluded that school counselors are providing interventions that address and promote students' academic, career, and personal/social development (Foster et al., 2005). Although the results of this study indicate that school counselors are rising to the bar set for them by national standards, this does not mean fulfilling these standards is the primary way in which school counselors have the luxury of focusing their time.

Filling multiple roles within the school is one aspect of the school counseling profession that may impede school counselors from performing duties outlined in the ASCA National Model. Perusse, Goodnough, Donegan, and Jones (2004) found that school counselors often carry out duties that are inappropriate based upon national standards for school counselors. These duties include maintenance of student records, registration and scheduling of new students, and the administration of aptitude, cognitive, and achievement tests. Additionally, Mostert et al. (1997) reported that school counselors face many difficulties that lead them to feel overwhelmed. These factors, which they summarized as either internal to the school setting or external, include inadequate resources, poor or non-existent in-service training, heavy caseloads, multi-problem families, and feelings of powerlessness to effect significant change in students' lives.

Furthermore, there is often a disconnection between the vision that school counselors have for themselves and what is asked of them by administrators. A recent study revealed that there is no mutually agreed upon agreement between school counselors and administrators regarding appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors (Perusse et al., 2004). The data also supported the idea that school counselors' duties are heavily influenced by the school principal's vision of what a school counselor's job should entail. The survey results indicated that the inappropriate duties performed by school counselors align with those most highly endorsed by school principals (Perusse et al., 2004).

The disconnections create tensions in the field. Weighing heavily upon school counselors are the professional standards put forth by the American School Counselor Association and vast and varied needs within the large caseloads of students they serve. Mostert et al. (1997) allude to the disconnection between preservice training for school counselor and the actual demands of counseling practice within the school setting. The scholars point out that the assumptions of unlimited time with clients, client cooperation, and the ability to make mistakes and adjustments, are is not realistic within the school setting. With differing views regarding appropriate school counseling duties, administrators may not share with school counselors the vision to meet individual student's counseling needs within the school setting. This author suggests that school counselors should be firmly grounded in a theoretical perspective for meeting student needs in this area and proposes an integrative model that both builds relationships and addresses issues in a brief manner.

The Argument for Integration

In a survey of school psychologists, Pryzwansky, Harris, and Jackson (1984) found that 69.7% of respondents believed that an eclectic approach was usually useful in providing direct intervention services, ranking eclecticism above any other theoretical viewpoint. Gaete and Gaete (2015) go so far as to say, "To our knowledge, there is no good reason for being uniperspectivist" (p. 165). Integration is defined by Guterman and Rudes (2005) as the combination of two or more distinct theories, therefore producing a novel, superior clinical framework.

Gaete and Gaete (2015) explain the difference between technical integration, theoretical integration, and technical eclecticism. According to their description, practitioners utilizing technical integration combine techniques from several theories without necessarily a full awareness of the tenets of each theory from which they draw. Technical eclecticism, they purport, aspires to select techniques based upon clinical efficacy. Finally, theoretical integration occurs when one draws upon more than one theoretical explanation to account for clinical phenomenon (Gaete and Gaete, 2015). The scholars' definition of technical eclecticism resounds most strongly with the model this article proposes. It is a combination of the principals of both person-centered counseling (PCC) and solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT) that are presented here as a useful model for school counselors. Gaete and Gaete (2015) explain the purpose well when they state, "It is about using the languages and theories we already have in a complementary way" (p. 171).

In their explanation of an integrative model of counseling, Holm-Hadulla, Hoffman, and Sperth (2011) point out that the limited time-frame available and wide

variety of living conditions and needs of clients necessitates that an assortment of interventions be available to counselors working with students. The author of this article agrees with this assessment and proposes a two phase model in which PCC acts as the foundation for student relationships and SFBT provides a research-based model for working with students in need of short-term, school-based counseling.

Person Centered Counseling

Basic Tenets

According to Rogers (1957) there are six necessary and sufficient conditions for change. These include: (a) psychological contact between two persons; (b) a state of incongruence, marked by vulnerability and anxiety, on the part of the client; (c) congruence and integration in the relationship on the part of the therapist; (d) unconditional positive regard on the part of the therapist toward the client; (e) the counselor's experience of empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavoring to communicate this awareness to the client; and (f) the achievement, even if it is to a minimal degree, of both the therapist's unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding of the client. For Rogers, the relationship was foundational and a precondition for any therapeutic change. Rogers (1957) describes the therapist's genuineness in the relationship as, "the opposite of presenting a façade, either knowingly or unknowingly" (p. 97). Rogers' statement will likely resonate with any school counselor who has worked with students, particularly teenagers, who can easily detect pretense.

Therapeutic Process and Progress Assessment

Boy and Pine (1963) reduce Rogers' client-centered approach to three stages: "catharsis and release, self understanding and insight, and reoriented goals and actions implementing them" (p. 16). According to Rogers (1992), basic conditions must exist for therapy to be successful. These conditions, which Rogers describes as "processes" include: (a) the establishment of rapport, (b) free expression of feeling by the client, (c) the client's recognition and acceptance of his spontaneous self, (d) responsible choice-making, (e) insight gaining through assimilated interpretation, and (f) growing into independence (with support). Rogers suggests that these are the basic elements or psychotherapy and can be applied to clients in any age category. He also purports that therapy ends naturally as the client takes independent steps toward coping with adjustment problems. The client, seeing his own ability to navigate his problems independently, feels assured that he could handle future situations on his own (Rogers, 1992).

Application Within the School Setting

Rogers (1957) believes that it was not a necessity in psychotherapy for the therapist to have an accurate psychological diagnosis of the client. This resonates strongly with the practicing school counselor, for whom it is neither expected nor appropriate to diagnose students. He points out the application of his theory to the school setting, noting that educational institutions often desire the development of character and personality in union with intellectual development. Crisp (2010) explains the strengths of the person-centered approach in regards to the therapeutic relationship. The scholar holds that PCC promotes the client's capacity for both decision-making and

self-healing while creating a trustworthy, safe, and therapeutic relationship.

Unconditional positive regard, empathy, and the counselor's attitudes of congruence, create and nurture the relationship.

The application of Rogers's theory to the school setting goes beyond the theorist's belief in its relevance. For example, in a study by Demos (1964), the researcher reviewed tape recorded sessions from 30 secondary school counselors to determine whether the basic tenets of PCC were characterized by the counselors who were rated by supervisors as "most successful" vs. "least successful" (p. 282). Based on the results, the scholar concluded that empathy, unconditional positive regard, and respect for the client, were distinguishable characteristics for the above-average counselors in comparison with the less successful counselors (Demos, 1964).

Additionally, scholars have asserted that that PCC principles can be applied in schools, not only by school counselors, but by other school personnel as well (Quicke, 1977; Boyer, 2016). Boyer (2016) notes that the creation of an alliance, based on person-centered principles, both communicates to children that they are worthy of dignity and respect, and allows educators to be non-judgmental and caring student advocates. As a research-based intervention, Alabi and Lambi (2015) recently found that students involved in a client-centered group experienced a significant reduction in bullying behavior, in comparison to the control group. Person-centered counseling principles of interaction, then, have the potential to create the kind of atmosphere that is helpful both in the counseling and the learning environment.

As a base for other, more specific interventions, PCC is an excellent foundation. Boy and Pine (1963) articulate this concept well by pointing out that a client-centered

counseling program is not limited only to the therapeutic relationship, but permeates all related takes in which the counselor participates. Client-centeredness, they purport, goes beyond being a technique employed when the counselor feels it has utility, but is both a basic attitudinal approach and operational philosophy. The authors also point out, “The client-centered school counselor does not negate the contributions made by other approaches to counseling . . . Client-centeredness is one viewpoint in creating an effective helping relationship for clients, but is not the only one” (Boy & Pine, 1963, p. 8). Other scholars have proposed two phase models of therapy utilizing PCC to create the therapeutic relationship (Boy & Pine, 1999; Cepeda & Davenport, 2006). Cepeda and Davenport (2006) presented a two phase model in combining PCC with SFBT, encouraging practitioners to, “draw heavily from Rogerian techniques during Phase I, and then move to make use of SF techniques during Phase II of psychotherapy” (p. 5). Recognizing the foundation laid by these authors, I propose a model using the same two phases, but through a different process.

The aforementioned scholars proposed a seamless combination of PCC and SFBT. In a school setting, however, the intention and direction of counseling is not always as clear as it may be in an outpatient setting. Students walk into the school counselor’s office for reasons ranging from needing to know their grade point average to struggling with suicidal ideation. Recognizing this difference, this model proposes a shift between Phase I and Phase II that demarks a change regarding the goal of time the student is spending with the school counselor. Phase I, the relationship-building phase, is utilized with any student with whom the school counselor interacts. The decision to move into Phase II is made after a discussion between the school counselor and

student in which the parties identify a specific problem that needs to be addressed and mutually decide that engagement in SFBT is the means by which to address this issue. For example, a student, Roberto, is referred to the school counselor, Ms. Chester, because he is consistently sleeping in his math class. Ms. Chester utilizes PCC techniques to establish a relationship with Roberto (Phase I). Roberto admits to Ms. Chester that he sleeps through class because he does not understand the course material and does not know how to seek help. Ms. Chester recognizes that Roberto may need more than one meeting with Roberto in order to address the issue. Ms. Chester tells Roberto she would like to meet with him to specifically focus on his experience in math. She explains that they will likely meet two or three times over the next couple of weeks and that, at the end of each of their meetings, they will decide together if they need to meet again. If Roberto agrees, their next meeting, during which SFBT techniques will be used, will mark the beginning of Phase II. In my experience, the majority of students with whom the school counselor interacts will not transition to Phase II. Having Phase II as an option, however, provides the school counselor with a brief, solution-focused approach to meeting individual counseling needs within the school setting. Also in contrast to other two phase models, I recognize that all issues may not be appropriately addressed in short-term therapy, and, within my model, allow for referral when needed.

Phase I of the proposed model involves establishing relationships with the students in the school counselor's case load. Each student who enters the school counselor's door is met with empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, and congruence, key elements of PCC. Consequently, the students see the school

counselor as an ally and recognize they can return to the welcoming environment at any time to discuss a wide-range of issues. Phase II employs SFBT if and when the school counselor and student decide there is a mutual desire and need to enter a short-term, goal-oriented counseling relationship. In Roberto's case, Ms. Chester identified that Roberto's issue could not be resolved in a single meeting, but was not an issue that was outside of her ability to help him address. With his consent, Ms. Chester and Roberto can work together in their next meeting to address Roberto's problem through SFBT. Keeping this in mind, we will now explore SFBT and its application within the school setting. The use of SFBT by the school counselor does not negate the conceptual and operational standards of PCC but, the author hopes to point out, is a valuable approach in meeting a wide array of student needs in a timely manner.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

Basic Tenets

According to de Shazer et al. (1986), the key to brief therapy is "utilizing what clients bring with them to help them meet their needs in such a way that they can make satisfactory lives for themselves" (p. 207). Similar to PC counselors, SF therapists do not fixate on labeling symptoms. Rather, they believe that solutions lie in changing interactions within the contexts of the distinct situation. A chief distinction between SF and other paradigms is that a brief therapist believes that, regardless of the complexity of the situation, a small change in a person's behavior can lead to meaningful, widespread change. In addition to their lack of focus on labeling the problem, the SF therapist does not feel it is necessary to have a full description of complaint in order to move toward its solution, a view it shares with PCC. The only thing necessary for

therapy to move forward is that the counselor and client know what things will look like when the problem is solved (de Shazer et al., 1986).

The central philosophy of SFBT is based on three rules: (a) "If it ain't broke, don't fix it;" (b) "Once you know what works, do more of it;" and (c) "If it doesn't work, don't do it again" (Sklare, 2005, pp. 9-10). There are also several assumptions upon which the counselor bases work with a client. The first assumption is that beneficial changes take place when we concentrate on successes. Secondly, all problems have identifiable exceptions that are transformable into solutions. The third assumption is that small changes cause a ripple effect that grows into larger changes. The fourth assumption is that every client possesses what it takes to resolve his/her own difficulties. Finally, client's goals are viewed in positive, rather than negative terms that reflect the absence of what the client wishes not to do (Sklare, 2005). Central techniques in SFBT include positive goal setting (including reframing negative goals), the miracle question, rediscovering unrecognized solutions, empowering through the recognition of students' resources, mindmapping, cheerleading, scaling, flagging the minefield, eliciting, amplifying, reinforcing and concluding the session with a message (Sklare, 2005). It is beyond the scope of this article to go into detail regarding all of these techniques. For a full explanation, as well as useful resources for use of SFBT within the school setting, see Sklare (2005).

Therapeutic Process and Progress Assessment

de Shazer et al. (1986) describe the therapeutic process in SFBT. The first session includes an introduction to the process, statement of the complaint, exploration of the exceptions to the rules of the complaint, establishment of therapeutic goals,

definition of potential solutions, intermission or consultation break for the therapist, and the delivery of the message from the team. Second and subsequent sessions are similar to the first session except that, since the complaint was established in the first session, there is not a focus on a description of the complaint in subsequent sessions.

After the first session, de Shazer and colleagues (1986) explain the initial focus of the conversation with the client is on determining what the client did that was helped ameliorate their problem and that they want to continue doing. If the client reports that things are better, the conversation moves to how to continue the forward progress. If things have not improved, the therapist will ask the client about what they are doing that is working and search for things that the client is doing and amplify them. If things are getting “better,” the time between sessions is extended, sending the message to the client that, since things are improving, the therapist’s presence is less necessary. Progress, then, is assessed on a session by session basis and depends primarily, if not fully, upon the perspective of the client.

Application Within the School Setting

Many authors recognize and encourage SFBT as a helpful intervention for school counselors (Bonnington, 1993; de Shazer, 2005; Littrell, Malia, & Vanderwood, 1995; Mostert et al., 1997; Sklare, 2005; Williams, 2000). Namely, Gingerich and Wabeke (2001) challenge the pathology-based model of mental health by calling upon practitioners to focus on the client’s strengths and desire to change. Although the scholars are quick to admit that further investigation needs to occur in order to solidify the efficacy of the approach, they point out the application of SFBT to working with students with behavioral disorders, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, and

substance abuse. They also note its utility in working with adult stakeholders within the school setting on behalf of the child.

Williams (2000) highlights positive effects for counselors, students, and their families when working within the school setting. He emphasizes that the expectation of change increases optimism and confidence not only in students receiving therapy through the model, but also in the therapists themselves. This “ripple effect,” he notes, is energizing for counselors, clients, their families, and other school personnel who are involved with students referred for services. This ripple effect is a powerful concept for school counselors endeavoring to illustrate their importance to stakeholders. Sklare (2005) points out that teachers often send students to school counselors hoping for a quick fix for whatever emotional, behavioral, or academic problems the student faces. Without rapid results, Sklare explains, teachers may lose confidence in both the school counselor’s function within the school and in the counseling process.

Mostert et al. (1997) sought to determine both whether training in SFBT would be an enduring contribution to school counselor’s professional development and examine the flexibility of the approach in meeting the demands of the school counselors involved in their study. The results of the study supported the notion that SFBT is both efficacious for students as well as a potential solution to many of the dilemmas faced by school counselors. The school counselors who participated in the study reported viable, visible, and desirable effects, specifically in regards to building and establishing rapport within the therapeutic relationship and increased quality and levels of communication. They also noted professional benefits from utilizing SFBT including gaining a clear sense of increased direction in both the therapeutic process and relationship, increasing

their own perceptions of professional efficacy, and aiding in issues with time constraints in service delivery. The participants also recognized the efficacy of the model in working with the students' parents, some of whom they reported had, prior to their use of SFBT, opposed to other therapeutic modalities. A strengthened sense of direction on the part of the school counselor along with increased buy-in from students, parents, and administrators speaks to the value of utilizing SFBT within the school setting. This, along with the aforementioned research, speaks to the general applicability of SFBT to the school setting. At this point, it is my hope that the reader understands the basic tenets of PCC and SFBT and each theory's viability within the school setting.

Potential Conflicts Within the Theories and Suggested Resolutions

Cepeda and Davenport (2006) recognize challenges in integrating PCC and SFBT. Rogerian counselors, they identify, are non-directive and non-goal-oriented while solution-focused counselors set quantifiable goals with clients. The scholars further point out that PC counselors focus on the here and now in order to facilitate change while solution-focused counselors utilize solution talk in order to work toward small, concrete goals. While this author acknowledges and appreciates the friction between these theories, I assert working within the school setting presents an appropriate venue in which to fuse the models. As previously mentioned, school counselors are limited in regards to the time they can spend with students. Based on this restraint, school counselors often need to work quickly toward change, necessitating a solution-focused, brief theory upon which to draw. Additionally, the school counselor does not necessarily need to enter into a therapeutic relationship in order to utilize the relationship-building components of PCC. Phase I of the proposed model employs elements of PCC in order

to create positive relationships with students. Movement into Phase II of the model is a decision made between the school counselor and student, and is based upon the student's goals and willingness to enter a different phase of counseling. Returning to the example of Roberto and Ms. Chester, the school counselor might say, "Roberto, I understand that you are having a difficult time in your math class. I'm sure that's very frustrating. With your permission, I'd like to meet with you a few times over the next few weeks to work together on how your experience might improve in that course. Would that be ok with you?" Notice that the Ms. Chester uses language that is both empathic and supportive of Roberto. She is careful to offer him a partnership, rather than stating that she is going to "help him with his problem." The transition from an introductory session to meetings working on a specific issue and utilizing SFBT marks the transition from Phase I to Phase II.

While acknowledging the tension between the two theories, Cepeda and Davenport (2006) also point out four assumptions shared by PCC and SFBT: (a) the centrality of personal growth, (b) their humanistic nature, (c) the phenomenological role of the counselor, and (d) the view that "life is change and change is inevitable" (p.6). This author acknowledges the tension between the two models and the conceptual intentions behind each theory of change. Their shared assumptions, however, evidence the ability of the skilled counselor to work between the theories in meeting student needs.

Due to the central importance of the therapeutic relationship in counseling, it is important to note Watson's (2006) assertion that a combination of the two theories may undermine the therapeutic relationship. The assignment of homework, he suggests,

may create resistance within the relationship if the client perceives the counselor's acceptance or encouragement hinge upon the successful completion of the tasks at hand. The scholar, reflecting upon Cepeda and Davenport's (2006) proposed blending of the theories, states:

Person-centered therapy is not focused on solving problems per se or on insuring that clients find immediate solutions to their problems but rather on changing clients' ways of thinking and feeling to reveal a host of new solutions that might not have been evident initially. (Watson, 2006, p. 14)

This author agrees with Watson's assessment of the potential friction between theories. Once again, however, we must regard the combination in the context of the school setting and in the manner by which this author is proposing theoretical integration. In order to explain this statement more fully, let us examine the proposed model.

An Integrative Model

Based on previous literature, this author contends that school counselors need elements of both PCC and SFBT in order to establish relationships and meet student needs (see Figure 1). A brief therapeutic approach that solely emphasizes problem solving and denies the importance of the relationship may not be as effective in creating return to the school counselor. Furthermore, a school counselor who immediately employs SFBT during each encounter may leave students uncertain regarding the school counselor's willingness or ability to engage in their lives without an identifiable problem. The proposed model, then, recognizes the critical importance of the relationship and allows both the school counselor and student flexibility in meeting short-term therapeutic needs and reaching goals.

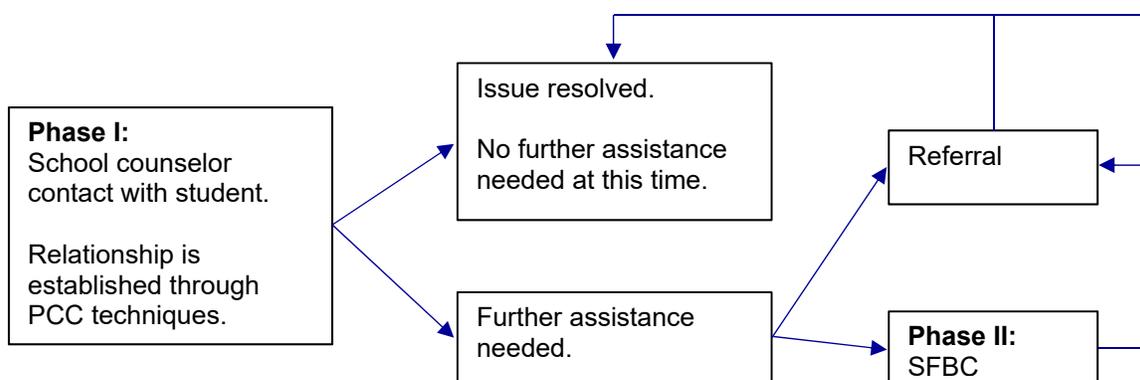


Figure 1. An integrative model of person-centered counseling and solution-focused brief therapy.

As previously described, Phase I of the integrative model involves the school counselor's contact with a student. Regardless of the reason for the interaction, the school counselor builds a relationship with the student through PCC techniques (e.g., empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, and congruence). If the issue the student presents is resolved, the student returns to class. The goal is building a positive, working relationship, meeting student needs, and laying the foundation for future interactions. As the school counselor replicates this type of contact with other students, he or she builds a reputation within the school as genuinely helpful resource.

It is possible, however, that that student and school counselor agree that further assistance is needed. If the issues go beyond the scope of the school counselor (e.g., the student is suicidal and needs an emergency evaluation), the practitioner refers the student to the appropriate resource (i.e., mental health counselor). However, if the student and school counselor identify a problem appropriately addressed through short-term counseling, the student and school counselor have the option of moving into the next phase. In Phase II, the school counselor utilizes SFBT to address the student's identified need(s). If the student's issues are resolved, the student and school counselor

end Phase II of the counseling relationship, with the understanding that the student may return to the school counselor on an as-needed basis. If the student's concerns remain unresolved, the school counselor discusses a referral to an outside agency with the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). In order to illustrate the model, we consider two case studies, Morgan and Ethan.

Case Study One: Morgan

Morgan is a high school freshman. Morgan is curious about how her grade point average (GPA) impacts her ability to gain acceptance to college. She decides to go by her school counselor, Mr. Smith's, office to review her transcript and GPA. Although he is busy with paperwork, Mr. Smith intentionally welcomes Morgan into his office and answers her questions. Utilizing empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, and congruence, Mr. Smith continues to foster the working relationship he and Morgan share throughout her time in high school. Morgan returns to class with her questions answered and feeling confident that she can return to Mr. Smith with any future needs.

Case Study Two: Ethan

Ethan is an 8th grade student with a history of depression and suicidal ideation. Ms. Rodriguez, the school counselor, works closely with Ethan throughout his time in middle school. Last year, Ms. Rodriguez, referred Ethan to a local agency after Ethan opened up her that he engaged in cutting. This year, Ethan is generally doing well in school, but is struggling with anxiety about an 8th grade writing project. Ethan and Ms. Rodriguez mutually decide to utilize SFBT to address his anxious feelings. After four sessions of SFBT, Ethan reports a noticeable decrease in his symptoms and feels that his anxiety regarding his project is resolved.

Discussion

In both cases, the school counselors engaged in Phase I, relationship establishment. In Morgan's case, Phase I encompassed their entire interaction. Mr. Smith's intentional use of PCC techniques, however, laid the foundation for their relationship. Morgan left Mr. Smith's office knowing that he is both a willing and available future resource. Ethan's case demonstrates the integrated approach's recursive nature. Ethan entered into Phase I with Ms. Rodriguez during his first year in middle school. When he came to see Ms. Rodriguez and revealed that he engaged in self-harm, the school counselor recognized Ethan needed further assistance and made a referral. This year, however, Ethan presented with an issue that is appropriately addressed through SFBT. Having established a positive relationship with Ethan, Ms. Rodriguez is seen as a trustworthy resource by the high school senior. After mutually deciding upon the course of action, Ms. Rodriguez employs Phase II of the model by addressing his feelings of anxiety regarding his writing project through SFBT. Figure 1 demonstrates the flexibility of the approach. School counselors are encouraged to utilize their problem-solving skills in determining the appropriateness of SFBT in meeting student needs.

Conclusion

From this author's personal experience, it occurred to me several years into my experience as a school counselor that my duties, in many ways, mirrored those of a triage nurse in the emergency room – students walked into my office with a wide-range of issues and, often, expected me to heal their wounds. School counseling can be an overwhelming profession, but, given the right tools, we are well-equipped for the job. It

would be impertinent to suggest that the combination of Rogers's tenets and SFBT is the one-size-fits-all solution. The blending of these techniques is valuable; however, for practitioners who desire a practical, intentional method for addressing student needs in a manner that is respectful to time-constraints felt by students, teachers, and school counselors alike. ASCA (2012) indicates that school counselors should strive to make direct services a vital part of their program. By meshing these theories, school counselors are provided with an excellent basis for meaningful relationships with students (PCC) along with an effective, goal-oriented, and short-term therapeutic method (SFBT) to assist in meeting student counseling needs. It is recommended that school counselors unfamiliar with either theory seek further training in PCC and SFBT in order to effectively employ the model. It is worth noting that this model may be valuable for elementary, middle, and high school settings.

Recommendation

This author proposed an integrative model that combines PCC and SFBT within the school setting. Research is needed in this area to determine if this is an effective method for meeting student needs. The impact of the integrative model could potentially be determined by comparing student outcomes between counselors who utilized the model with student outcomes from school counselors utilizing different theoretical underpinnings. Additionally, the need for the approach could be determined by reaching school counselors' feelings of efficacy in meeting student short-term counseling needs. If it were found that school counselors do not feel equipped to meet the short-term counseling needs of their students, training in and dispersion of this integrative model could be seen as more critical.

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