



Dr. Mayer's Memo

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School Counselors

A recent incident in the Chicagoland area has prompted me to write in support and appeal for school counselors.

The Incident:

A public high school counselor and girls basketball coach in the suburban area of Chicago was dismissed from his job upon the publication (self-published) of a book on relationships. (sic) The book was sexist, chauvinistic, crude, prejudice, and in my opinion, ignorant. What was shocking to me was that this individual, with these views on human behavior, was allowed to influence the lives of young people and as a counselor no less. Was no one watching the hen house? (Excuse the pun, but I can't resist in light of the nature of this 'book' he wrote.) Were his superiors reprimanded for not supervising this man? Was he ever supervised? (A whole other discussion.)

I have been consulting with school counselors for 30 years and there is not a more noble group of educators and care givers around. The demands placed on those who staff counseling departments are enormous and typically with the least amount of support of any department in a school. I find this paradoxical given that the social and behavioral needs of our students are geometrically increasing every year. Strengthening our counseling departments should be a top priority for prevention efforts. What better way to prevent school violence than to have a strong, vibrant school counseling program. Further, in private schools, what a better way to attract and keep students than to broadcast the excellence of your counseling department. The counseling department should be the crown jewel of the school. After all, the local public school teaches read'n, write'n and rithmetic' too, but here's what we do better. Think about it.

Pass this memo to parents, let's get parents to rally around our counseling departments. Maybe push legislators to provide funds for counseling departments. WE DON'T NEED MORE ANTI-DRUG OR ANTI-BULLYING POSTERS IN OUR SCHOOLS. **WE NEED MORE GREAT, QUALIFIED COUNSELORS for today's student's needs!** Make this a priority for fundraising—maybe a school angel can donate to bolster the counseling department? Got a better cause?

And, as long as we're at it. Take a look at the physical condition of your counseling department. How inviting is it when it is relegated to the dingy most neglected part of the school? Again, money better spent than some ineffective prevention dog and pony show that we love to throw money at. Make the counseling department LOOK inviting, safe, confidential, welcoming for students to bring their concerns. Let's look professional. Kids pick up on the symbolism of offices falling apart, no supplies, walls so thin you can hear the conversations two offices away. No wonder kids are teeming with emotion inside the school. They have nowhere to go once there.

FEEL FREE TO PASS THIS MEMO TO ANOTHER IN ITS ENTIRETY. LET'S REACH PARENTS!

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Send me an email to get on the list. There is no charge for this resource.

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www.DrJohnMayer.com

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