School Counselors--More

My last issue on school counselors was well received and I had more to add so here goes.

Counselors are trained professionals.
Treat the counselors as the professionals they are! Long gone are the days, which were my early days of consulting to schools, when the counselors were populated by sports coaches who wanted time to go over game tapes, retired teachers, teachers who couldn’t control a classroom, etc. Today’s counselors are specifically trained for the role and add to the school.

Use counselors-Built in resources.
Tap into the counselors’ resources! It amazes me how much school time and resources are wasted on outside resources coming into schools when there is a department of professionals who know your students better, the environment of the school better and tapping into them is great support for their integration into the school. Look to them 1st for such needs. Maybe the outside resource should just be used to guide/structure/give direction to their professional knowledge.

Develop outside resources-as resources
Speaking of using outside resources, encourage your counselors to develop a list of resources including therapeutic resources, counselors, therapists, and experts in various areas. But a word of caution here for the counselors, building such a list of resources shouldn’t be done casually. Too often I have seen such referral lists compiled based on such parameters as: convenience/location/gender/language/cost/marketing. Now all those parameters can go into a resource list, BUT I would add: proven competence/accessibility & accountability to the school/ commitment/rapport (Including social skills!)/professionalism/experience/training/education/specialty/parent & student feedback/RESULTS.

Don’t Handicap the counselors.
I pointed out in the last issue how embarrassing the environment of some counseling offices are--run down--no privacy--no soundproofing--paint chipping--smells--but, there are other ways we handicap the counselors. Faculty uninformed of how to use the services--Lack of integration with the discipline office--Restricting student access to counselors--and so on. Think how you may be blocking these pros from their work.

Counselors Make Your Case.
Counselors: scrape and claw to get in front of the faculty to educate them on what you can and can’t do FOR THEM. Try sending out periodic emails to the faculty on your services--how about including case examples (anonymous) and also resources for the classroom??