

Preface

This book is designed for school counselors who are looking to provide confident and competent guidance to students who have physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities. It gives counselors a highly useful, easily referenced resource to keep close at hand. We are pleased to be publishing it now in its second edition, as the topic has even greater relevance today for school counselors, teachers, and parents of children with disabilities.

Since the first edition was published in 1999, the laws affecting people with disabilities have been reauthorized and strengthened, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was signed into law, and the incidence rate of a number of disabilities has increased. In response, many excellent Web sites and other new resources have emerged as strong assets for those working with and supporting students with disabilities. We have identified and recommended these new sources of information where relevant.

Readers of this edition will find additional elements that will assist school counselors in determining how best to serve students with disabilities. We have made every effort to include current information about the counseling needs of students with disabilities and how school counselors can best meet these needs. The information also has great relevance for teachers as well as parents of children with disabilities.

OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS

It is our sincere hope that this book will provide a good starting place for school counselors to proactively include all students in the delivery of a comprehensive guidance program. The thoroughly updated Chapter 1, covering special education law, describes the most recent

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changes shaping the legal context for working with this population of students. Knowledge of this context is important to school counselors as they work as members of school multidisciplinary teams.

Chapter 2 looks closely at specific learning disabilities, and the counselor's role in identifying them and developing counseling plans.

In Chapter 3, appropriate and timely assessment techniques are covered, and an updated and expanded case study is included that guides counselors through reporting assessment findings.

Chapter 4 helps readers connect data to appropriate interventions by exploring a comprehensive model we developed, known by the acronym TREAT: **T**heories and concepts, **R**elationships, **E**nvironment, **A**djunct services, and **T**reatable goals and objectives. This model provides goals that are helpful in designing effective interventions for students with disabilities. It also represents a focused approach that draws information and interpretation from all stakeholders (identified student, parents, teachers, counselors, and others). A worksheet for applying the TREAT model is included.

Chapter 5 discusses identifying, designing, and carrying out both measurable and manageable counseling goals for students with disabilities and provides examples of behavioral and affective goals. The chapter also provides a rationale for why school counselors must be involved in establishing any and all goals for which they will be responsible.

Chapter 6 covers working with families and encourages school counselors to adopt both a solution-focused and systems perspective—at least to some extent—when working with students and families. Examples of how to establish trust with parents, as well as how to consider the needs of the siblings of children who have disabilities, are included.

Chapter 7 challenges and encourages school counselors to provide leadership, advocacy, collaboration, and systemic change when meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

Professional school counselors can and do make a difference in the lives of the students they serve, but they are sometimes expected to do too much or to assume inappropriate roles. Reading this book and applying the knowledge gained from it will help counselors meet the growing challenges in their schools with a renewed sense of self-assurance and belief in what they do. In this way, school counselors can continue to demonstrate the value

of their role and the contributions that the comprehensive school counseling program makes to students, families, schools, and society at large. A suggested reading list is included for readers who would like to explore certain topics in greater depth.

We appreciate having the opportunity to update this resource, and hope that this book is useful in meeting the goal of increasing effective counseling services for all students.