

The Professional School Counselor and Comprehensive Conflict-Resolution Programs (Adopted 2000)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

The professional school counselor recognizes the need for all students to have access to a conflict-resolution program that is part of a comprehensive developmental school counseling program. Such programs foster a positive campus climate and promote lifelong skills enabling individuals to resolve conflict in a positive manner. Comprehensive conflict-resolution programs combine peer mediation, the incorporation of conflict-resolution principles into the academic curriculum and the education of all members of the school community in applying methods for alleviating conflicts.

The Rationale

Violence-reduction and conflict-management programs are integral to a safe school environment. A comprehensive conflict-resolution program's goal is to prevent violence and create an optimal learning environment free of discrimination resulting from differences in ethnicity, culture, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs. These programs properly implemented by professional school counselors serve to reduce violence, lower tension and lessen anxiety among students, thereby increasing the opportunity for improved academic performance, positive social adjustment and increased attendance. Implementing a comprehensive conflict-resolution program empowers and encourages students to take personal and collective responsibility for their conduct and the climate of their campus.

The Professional School Counselor's Role

It is the professional school counselor's role to provide leadership in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of schoolwide, comprehensive conflict-resolution programs utilizing both prevention and intervention strategies. The professional school counselor should ensure that the comprehensive conflict-resolution program includes prevention services, training, education in recognition of early warning signs, intervention services, crisis response and follow-up, community involvement, peer mediation programs and evaluation of program effectiveness.

Summary

A comprehensive conflict-resolution program promotes a safe school environment that permits optimal personal growth and learning. Through participation in a comprehensive conflict-resolution program, students learn skills that maximize their potential for reaching personal goals and success in school.