

Social Media



I HAVE HEARD REPORTS OF A PARTICULAR STUDENT BEING CYBERBULLIED. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THE BULLYING MYSELF

AS IT'S DONE VIA STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS AND/OR E-MAIL ACCOUNTS. ADDITIONALLY, THE STUDENT BEING CYBERBULLIED HASN'T COME TO ME FOR HELP. WHAT'S MY ROLE IN THIS INSTANCE?

If you heard about a student being bullying in a school setting, you would most likely talk with the student even if the student hadn't approached you. Simply because the bullying happens in cyberspace doesn't mean you wouldn't offer the same type of support. Cyberantics will indubitably leak into the school setting; therefore every school district should develop a policy regarding cyber-bullying. As a pre-emptive approach, school counselors can educate students and parents about cyber-safety and cyber-bullying. Ethically educators cannot be unresponsive to this potentially deadly form of bullying.



I HAVE SET UP A FACEBOOK PAGE FOR THE SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT FOR MY STUDENTS. ALTHOUGH I

AM CAREFUL NOT TO FRIEND ANY OF MY STUDENTS ON MY PERSONAL FACEBOOK ACCOUNT, SOMETIMES I SEE THINGS VIA THIS DEPARTMENT PAGE THAT MAKE ME WORRY FOR MY STUDENTS, SUCH AS UNDERAGE DRINKING OR OTHER RISKY BEHAVIORS. IF THESE ACTIVITIES HAPPEN OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS, WHAT IS MY ROLE AS THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR?

The prime directive of a school counselor is to advocate for our students. You can best address it in this situation by clarifying the boundaries of the school counseling department Facebook page. Put an informed consent statement on the front page. Avoiding the slippery slope of a dual relationship with a student on Facebook is a wise idea; however, cyber education is a proactive way to help students understand the impact and consequences of their posts online. React we must.

Colleagues Not Doing Their Jobs



MY SCHOOL RECENTLY FILLED A POSITION CALLED "SAFE COORDINATOR." THE WOMAN IN THIS NEW POSITION ONLY

HAS A BACHELOR'S DEGREE AND NO SCHOOL COUNSELING OR RELATED BACKGROUND. SHE IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE GO-TO PERSON IF A STUDENT IS SUICIDAL, ABUSED OR HAS ANY OTHER HIGH-LEVEL CONCERN. WE HAVE TOLD ADMINISTRATION WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS POSITION SINCE WE HAVE TWO HIGHLY QUALIFIED SCHOOL COUNSELORS ON STAFF. TEACHERS HAVE ALSO INDICATED THEY HAVE REFERRED STUDENTS TO HER, AND SHE DOESN'T SEE THEM FOR SERIOUS ISSUES. MY QUESTION IS, WHAT'S THE SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ROLE IN THIS SITUATION? WHAT IF SOMETHING SERIOUS DOES HAPPEN BUT WE WEREN'T INFORMED? WHAT ARE OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS SITUATION?

Unfortunately, there are no hard and fast rules for this situation. Group membership on a faculty can be difficult; yet, success as a group member is critical for school counselors to develop a place as a collaborator. Collaborative skills are a necessary foundation for leadership, and without leadership our advocacy efforts on behalf of students are stymied. The title and position of "school counselor" adds the additional responsibility to be inclusive of all faculty to the fullest extent possible. At the same time, circumstances such as this make this collaboration almost untenable.

If possible include the SAFE coordinator in a solution. The SAFE coordinator may not see students for serious matters because she knows she could do harm. She may welcome an approach where you blend the two roles and the qualified professional school counselor performs the personal counseling and the SAFE coordinator picks up activities that use her skills, such as designing behavior modification programs and implementing data-driven interventions.

Although you've already expressed your concern to administration with no results, keep trying in subtle and overt ways. When talking to administrators about circumstances

affecting students' success, glean as much information from different sources as possible, such as court cases involving educators who are placed in positions they aren't qualified for and who harm a student(s). School districts have a sharper uphill battle defending educators who are practicing outside their certification especially when they sanction their out-of-field practice.

Share potential solutions with the principal. Identify politically astute allies early to see if they can influence administration. If all efforts fail, document conversations you've had about necessary changes and continue to do an excellent job in your assignments. The ethical school counselor aspires to demonstrate strong interpersonal skills and the ability to successfully move within and among the different "camps" that can be found in schools.



OUR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST OFTEN DOESN'T MEET WITH STUDENTS ON

HER CASE LOAD, FALSIFIES TESTS/ DOCUMENTS AND LIES TO PARENTS AND ADMINISTRATION REGARDING MEETING IEP GOALS AND SERVICES SHE SHOULD, BY LAW, BE PROVIDING. I HAVE APPROACHED HER IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER, BUT SHE IMMEDIATELY GETS DEFENSIVE. MY PRINCIPAL HAS COMPLAINED TO THE DISTRICT OFFICE, BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE. WHAT ARE MY ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE STUDENTS WHO AREN'T GETTING THE SERVICES THEY DESERVE?

The answer to this case rests with the administration. In a serious personnel matter such as falsifying tests/documents and not adhering to IEP goals, hard evidence should be gathered by the administration, which has to force the issue with the district. If this is not going to happen then the school counselor continues to practice within the parameters of his or her certificate and continues to professionally interact with the school psychologists and the administration regarding the issues. Document your efforts and continue to look for politically astute ways to make change. However, this is a serious issue for administration, which has the responsibility to solve it.