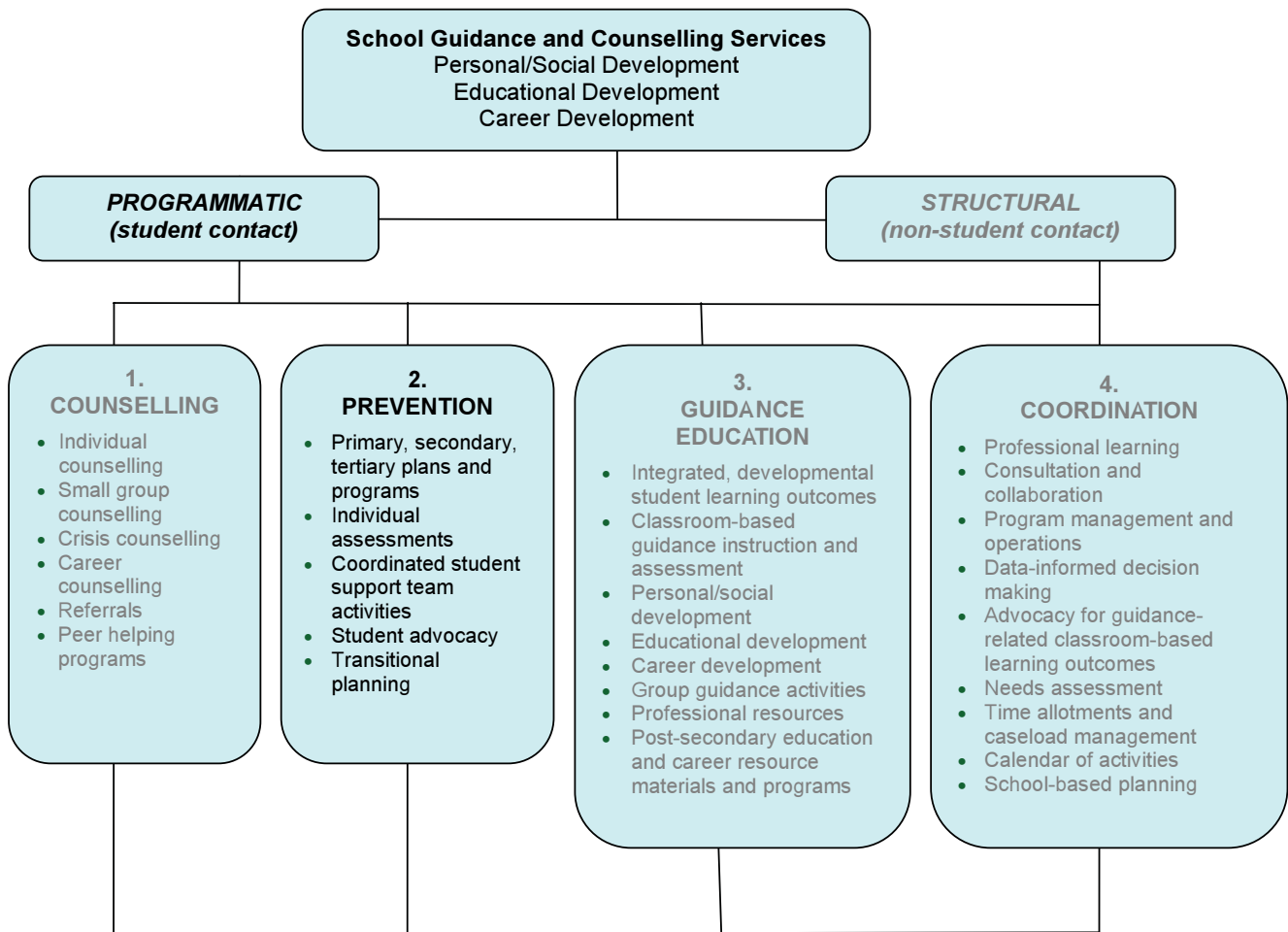

Chapter 4

Prevention – Component 2 of School Guidance and Counselling Services

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Prevention – Component 2 of School Guidance and Counselling Services

In this chapter:

- Primary, secondary, tertiary plans and programs
 - Individual assessments
 - Coordinated student support team activities
 - Student advocacy
 - Transitional planning
-

Prevention Priorities



The goal of primary prevention is to avert known risks by creating awareness and providing information in areas with the potential to affect school success.

Primary Prevention

Proactive guidance and counselling services tend to begin with whole-class instructional sessions. Generally, proactive priorities include prevention programs, post-secondary preparation programs, social skill development programs, and self-knowledge sessions. Specifically, these priorities may include, but are not restricted to, friendship skills, personal safety, violence prevention, bullying awareness, self-management, youth-related issues, substance use, educational portfolio planning, post-secondary planning, and career planning.



The goal of secondary prevention is to provide early intervention and support to students whose difficulties have the potential to escalate and affect school success.

Secondary Prevention

The counsellor's role in secondary prevention may be either as an intervener or as an intermediary. This role may be complex and multi-layered. It may include, but is not restricted to, early intervention, individual counselling, acting as a referral agent for external services, providing interim support while awaiting external services, advocacy, membership in a school-based planning team, and acting as a mediator or teacher.

Tertiary Prevention

School counsellors may provide essential services to students in need through individual and small group guidance and counselling interventions, crisis intervention, and staff/parent consultation to address immediate or ongoing concerns related to existing severe difficulties of



The goal of tertiary prevention is to provide essential services to address immediate concerns related to existing difficulties of students.

students. These students may include, but are not restricted to, students with high risk factors for and low resiliency to social, personal, or educational difficulties; students with symptoms (based on a clinical diagnosis or life circumstances) that may affect attendance and success at school; and students with individual education plans (IEPs), including behaviour intervention plans (BIPs) and individual transition plans (ITPs).

Most school counsellors provide students with direct services based on an assessment of issues that are having an impact on their success in school. Services are needed following threat, tragedy, trauma, or societal issues or events that may have a negative effect on all, most, a few, or even individual students. Other services, such as innovative career exploration, opportunities for youth volunteers, leadership groups, peer helping programs, and instituting a Teens Against Drinking and Driving committee take a more proactive approach.

Individual Assessments



An individual assessment by the school counsellor is parallel to a teacher conducting a pretest before teaching a specific learning outcome. No consent is required.

Individual assessments are also known as individual inventories or appraisals. They must not be confused with specialized assessments or formal diagnostic assessments (which require parental consent, as appropriate).

Generally, school counsellors use a series of tools to systematically identify the needs and potential issues for all students in the school, just as classroom teachers use a series of tools to determine the learning levels of all students in their classroom.

The assessments conducted by school counsellors often take the form of observations, checklists, student journal entries, behaviour charts, anecdotal data collection from staff and student(s), case study analysis, and interviewing.

Specialized assessments (including formal, diagnostic assessments) are completed with the informed consent of the student and parents, as appropriate, and are often conducted by school division clinical staff (through a referral process) or specialized external agencies (such as a mobile crisis unit, Child and Family Services, or an adolescent mental health clinic).

To clarify the distinction between the use of individual assessments and the use of specialized assessments, it is helpful to consider the assessments by the school counsellor as parallel to a teacher conducting a pretest before teaching a specific learning outcome. No consent is required.

Coordinated Student Support Team Activities



All students are the concern of the school counsellor, and all students receive service from the counsellor in the form of the comprehensive guidance and counselling program.

All students enrolled in the school are the concern of the school counsellor, and all students receive service from the counsellor in the form of the comprehensive guidance and counselling program. For some students with specific and exceptional learning needs, however, the role of the school counsellor often involves coordinated individual planning that includes learning outcomes that are achieved through counselling.

As team members, school counsellors contribute to the education, development, and support of the whole child through the student support team, according to team members' experience and training.

Exceptional Learning Needs and At-Risk Students*

Comprehensive guidance and counselling programs and services are inclusive. They are intended to help students realize their full potential regardless of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and other challenges.

The function of school counsellors with students with specific challenges may include

- working as a team member with other support professionals
- intervening with students with difficult behaviour
- providing responsive programs, including crisis counselling, group guidance and counselling, family support, and consultation
- providing in-service support presentations to staff
- providing specific programming to strengthen personal and interpersonal skills such as problem solving, decision making, understanding feelings, and self-acceptance
- providing referrals for additional specialized support services
- mediating and facilitating effective behaviour change
- providing social skills training individually and in small groups
- assisting in establishing appropriate individual behaviour plans
- serving as a consultant and resource to parents, teachers, and other school personnel
- promoting workshops for staff and students on various disorders
- supporting parents and families
- providing career planning

* Source: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. "Guidance and Counselling: Special Needs and At-Risk Students." *Guidance and Counselling*. 2006. <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/guidance/special_needs_at_risk.html>. (20 Feb. 2007).

- making referrals to appropriate specialists
- participating in an individual planning process



An individual education plan (IEP) is a global term that includes plans such as behaviour intervention plans (BIPs), transitional intervention plans (ITPs), and other student-specific plans.

The function of school counsellors with students with unique challenges is flexible, depending on which staff members are best suited to support specific students at specific times, and on personality, established rapport, skills, expertise, caseload, and many other variables. Using a case-by-case approach, the role of each member of the student support team is clarified by the team in the creation of the individual education plan.

Below are two sample behaviour plans that show the interplay among all student support team members, including the school counsellor, in meeting the needs of a student.

Sample 1: Sample Behaviour Intervention Plan*

Purpose and Background

The purpose of the plan is to have Jim develop four social skills and four self-control techniques to gain positive acceptance and support from his peer group. This needs to be done with careful regard for the safety of other students.

Background information is extensive but the pertinent elements are outlined below.

Jim is wary of males in positions of trust and builds relationships more easily with females. This is particularly true when he is stressed. After a negative experience, he repeatedly mulls over perceived injustices. He becomes physically agitated and very oppositional during these times. He requires help to get himself out of these agitated states and is capable of doing this through talking. This may best be done with female staff.

* Source: Adapted and excerpted from Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth. "Sample Behaviour Intervention Plan." *Behaviour Intervention Planning (BIP)*. <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/bip/sample.html#hsupports>. (27 Feb. 2007).

Jim has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and has a general pattern of responding with physical agitation and opposition to unstructured situations. He does respond positively to medication, but this helps only on low stress days.

Jim can misinterpret others' behaviours and intent. Volume can trigger anger reactions. When he is feeling vulnerable, Jim can misinterpret eye contact and frowns as challenging behaviour. He becomes quite uncooperative during these times, sometimes withdrawing into himself and sometimes exploding for no apparent reason. However, the explosion does serve to keep people away.

Schoolwork is particularly difficult for Jim. He has clear areas of weakness that will be addressed in the IEP. However, this problem is further exacerbated by Jim's underlying sense of inadequacy and corresponding fear that he will be "found out." Jim's need to hide his weaknesses hampers attempts to assist him in learning academic skills.

Jim has a sense of humour and loves to banter verbally. Eye contact is possible during these times. This positive state is typically noticed after he has had a good game (he is an excellent basketball player) or after he has helped someone (e.g., a younger child in trouble).

Critical Programming Needs

System	Social Learning	Personal/Emotional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Jim stop hitting or kicking children on the playground • Ensure that Jim stop threatening and belittling children in the classroom • Agree with Mrs. Sommers (Jim's mom) to an action plan for when Jim becomes uncontrollable • Develop an alternative to being sent home at noon hours • Family Services provide some in-home support when Jim's behaviour becomes dangerous to his brothers and sisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give Jim cognitive behavioural training to help him handle his fears • Teach Jim new responses in dealing with angry feelings • Give Jim the opportunity to experience working within his mastery level, and provide structured positive feedback to help him recognize his strengths • Give Jim the opportunity to take a leadership role with children who are academically less able than he is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach and maintain classroom routines and structures as much as possible • Give Jim the opportunity to meet with a female staff person, one-to-one, during times of stress • Control volume whenever possible and particularly when dealing with Jim on problem issues • Provide positive alternatives to high-risk activities, particularly to replace unstructured activities that involve physical contact • Provide high eye contact and smiles during positive interactions, and limit eye contact or frowns during stressful interactions • Maintain and monitor medication

Interventions

Proactive	
Structure	Process
<p>All staff will be made aware of triggers at the next school staff meeting.</p> <p>Jim will meet with the educational assistant (EA) at the beginning of the class to go over work and any change in routines.</p> <p>The counsellor, with the support of the psychologist and assistance of the EA, will help Jim develop more effective ways of dealing with personal and intrapersonal problems.</p> <p>The resource teacher will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up a group writing process for Jim and some other students to further develop writing skills • assist the teacher in developing an effective cross-age tutoring program 	<p>The psychologist will present information the team has regarding effective strategies for working with Jim.</p> <p>The time spent in this activity will usually be short but the EA can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the time if Jim is too upset to be in the classroom • involve others for help if needed <p>The counsellor will assist the EA in helping Jim clarify basic problem events. Jim can share this information at scheduled times (after lunch on even days). The counsellor will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist Jim in the re-entry process, when he has lost privileges, by helping him develop more effective ways of handling problems • assist in mediation when there are major conflicts with other students <p>The writing program, involving seven students, will be highly structured and focus on positive rewards and encouragement. The program will occur on odd days after recess.</p> <p>The cross-age tutoring will be carefully structured with students trained on where and how to give tokens for success. There will be support for giving accurate positive feedback.</p>

Reactive	
Structure	Process
<p>A graduated re-entry plan will be developed for those situations where Jim must remove himself from a class or outdoor activity.</p> <p>Alternative workspace will be provided in either the sick room or the resource room. When administrators are present, Jim will use the sick room or the resource room.</p> <p>A structured re-entry to the lunchtime games will be offered under the direction of the physical education teacher. Jim will be given the chance to referee games at this time.</p>	<p>The counsellor and EA will explain the plan to Jim, and the principal will give formal direction and answer any questions. The focus will be on Jim developing self-control.</p> <p>Jim, together with the EA and resource teacher, will develop a positive workspace in these places and be shown where assignments will be placed. The goal is to have a positive, predictable place where he can reduce stressors.</p> <p>The physical education teacher will approach Jim and, if he is agreeable, make arrangements for him to be at school twice a week during lunch hours. The program will be initially implemented for two weeks.</p>

Divisional Supports

- The **principal** provides support to staff when Jim's behaviour is dangerous to himself or others and determines when the formal safety plan must be implemented. His role with Jim is that of the person in authority. He will be identified as the person who decides whether Jim is in or out of the classroom or school and who takes the official responsibility for these decisions.
- The **classroom teacher** provides programming for regular subject areas and a positive classroom environment with clearly defined expectations and routines, and leads day-to-day problem solving around common social issues. Her role with Jim is that of director and coach. She will provide Jim with many high-success opportunities so that he can experience positive results from following her direction, but she will be firm in her expectations that he follow her direction.
- The **school counsellor** will meet with Jim on a regular basis to discuss alternative strategies for dealing with stress and will meet with Jim and other students involved to resolve major social issues that are too time-consuming to solve within the regular classroom. The school counsellor will take a mediator role with Jim when his behaviour has caused him to be removed from the classroom or school and will help him develop personal plans to better handle situations and gain re-entry.
- The **resource teacher** will work with Jim in a small group to help him develop writing skills and will assist the teacher in implementing a student tutor program that can help Jim and other students in the classroom to practise basic reading skills. She will take a strong encourager role.
- The **physical education teacher** will continue to support Jim in developing his basketball skills and give him the opportunity to develop some refereeing skills during the noon-hour games. He will take a mentor role.
- The **educational assistant** will meet with Jim first period in the morning to outline the day, determine Jim's response to direction, assist with projects, and be available when classroom or recess is too stressful. The educational assistant may also assist Jim in completing self-directed learning activities and provide some of the structured, positive feedback. She will be the listener, particularly in the morning when Jim sometimes tends to unload, and the supporter.
- The **school psychologist** will attend regular meetings with the team and provide parents and staff with strategies that may be beneficial to Jim in dealing with fears of inadequacy. The school psychologist will work with Jim's mother to identify and contact a therapist or psychiatrist if this seems helpful.

Sample 2: Circle of Care—Multi-system 24/7 Planning Process*

The Circle of Care planning process is based on results of a three-year pilot project to provide and evaluate coordinated services to children aged 5 to 11 with profound emotional/behavioural disorders who fit the following profile:

- the child/adolescent is a danger to self and/or to others and his/her actions are marked by impulsive, aggressive, and violent behaviour
- the behaviour is chronic—the disorder is persistent over a lengthy period of time
- the behaviour is pervasive and consistent—the disorder negatively affects all the child's/adolescent's living environments including home, school, and community
- the child/adolescent requires or is already receiving a combination of statutory and non-statutory services from the child and family, education, mental health, and/or justice systems as defined within *The Child and Family Services Act*, the *Young Offenders Act*, and *The Mental Health Act*.

What is the Circle of Care?

The Circle of Care is

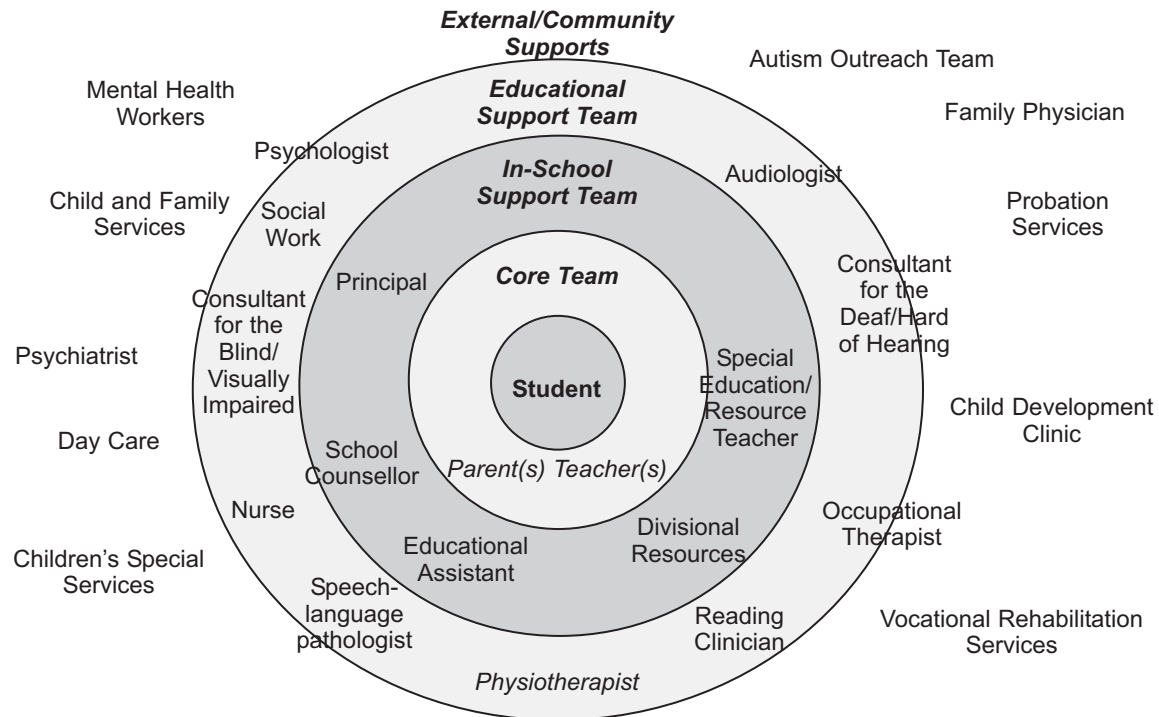
- a consensus model that is respectful of the experience and expertise that all team members bring to the process
- a process for coordinating multi-system services around child-centred shared service goals
- a method for developing individualized 24/7 service plans for children with complex needs and their families that involves all caregivers in sharing information, expertise, and resources

The diagram on the following page shows the multi-system services that support Circle of Care in Manitoba.

The planning process used in the Circle of Care concept is easily adaptable for students with complex counselling needs. Strategic partnerships may be used for a variety of specific mental health issues.

* Source: Excerpted from Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. "Circle of Care: Multisystem 24/7 Planning Process." <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/coc/index.html>. (27 Feb. 2007).

Circle of Care in Manitoba



There are seven basic components to a Circle of Care planning process:

- describing behaviours
- respectful understanding of the student
- sharing meaningful information
- developing shared service goals
- creating Circle of Care interventions
- cultural competence
- case management process

Student support teams have changing memberships depending upon student need and staff expertise. As a result, roles and responsibilities within individual education planning and appropriate programming are flexible. For instance, in some situations, it may be the school counsellor who is responsible for delivering cognitive-behavioural strategies because that is the individual best situated to provide effective support. In other situations, it may be a school psychologist, a behaviour specialist, a psychiatrist, or a resource teacher who delivers programming.

As mentioned earlier in the *Sourcebook*, individual education planning uses a team approach. By doing so, the entire student support team is able to provide data, to consider alternatives, and to provide effective service. The creation of the components of an individual education plan (IEP), including a behaviour intervention plan (BIP), individual transition plan (ITP), or any other specific plan for a student that involves a student support team should be accomplished by the team. The written plan is managed by the individual on the team who is best qualified to do so, with the input of the team. As in service delivery, this decision is typically made on a case-by-case basis and is dependent upon the staff member best situated to accomplish the task according to professional expertise, training, and time commitments.

Student Advocacy

One of the roles of school counsellors is advocacy, both in terms of promoting a comprehensive and developmental approach to guidance and counselling services and in terms of supporting students as they progress through the education process and through life's changes. School counsellors work with students, school administration, teachers, clinicians, parents, and the community to advocate for positive solutions to emerging concerns and difficult situations. These concerns and situations may range from relatively minor issues to serious, seemingly life-altering events. Common advocacy opportunities arise when students face suspension or expulsion from school, when students seek assistance in clarifying their position on educational difficulties with staff and parents, and when students wish to engage in mediation or restitution activities.

Many students also require additional support to advocate on their own behalf until they have developed sufficient skills in being a self-advocate. Part of the role of the school counsellor is to teach responsibility taking, decision making, and appropriate independence.

Another component of student advocacy is being a spokesperson for a comprehensive and developmental guidance and counselling program that meets the needs of the students. This may involve such activities as arranging meetings with staff, the community, the Chamber of Commerce, the board of trustees, the parent council, students, and others.

Transitional Planning

Similar to student advocacy, transitional planning assists students, staff, parents, and communities with changes in life circumstances. From regular preparatory work with students and families related to student transfers from one level of education to another (e.g., Early Years to Middle Years; Middle Years to Senior Years; Senior Years to post-secondary education, apprenticeship, or the workforce), the school counsellor eases the transition process into a series of manageable steps.

For most students, transitional planning is accomplished through orientation sessions: whole class guidance education sessions in which awareness of the upcoming change, information related to the new setting or course options, and strategies for decision making are provided. For some students with specific or exceptional needs, transitional planning is started at the student support team level and an individual transition plan is created specifically for the individual student affected by the anticipated change. Some situations that involve individualized transitional planning are



For examples of individual transition plans, please see www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aut/pdf/chapter3.pdf and www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/fas/pdf/8.pdf.

To learn more about a tool to create a transitional plan for students leaving Senior Years, please visit PATH at www.drcvictoria.com/forms/PATH-explanation.pdf.

- a student is completing Senior Years education and will require a process for transitioning into the community, planning for the future, and securing ongoing support beyond the school
- a student is returning to school after having been hospitalized for an extended period of time
- a student is returning to school after being incarcerated for a period of time

Transitional planning is designed to increase opportunities for student success at school, at home, and in the community.

Chapter Summary

- All students may receive service from the school counsellor in the form of the comprehensive guidance and counselling program.
- The prevention component of the guidance and counselling program is the area in which the greatest overlap between clinical staff, teaching staff, and the school counsellor occurs.
- The prevention component is divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, to clarify the different functions of the school counsellor in anticipating or addressing existing student needs.
- A student support team approach is used with students who have specific or exceptional learning needs. In this way, appropriate educational programming is clarified, monitored, and adjusted by all professionals who are intervening to assist the student. This may result in an individual education plan (including an ITP or BIP) or Circle of Care plan.
- Two important functions of prevention work are student advocacy and transitional planning.
- Individual assessments conducted by the school counsellor are separate from and must not be confused with specialized assessments conducted by clinical staff and external agencies. Parental consent, as appropriate, is required for specialized assessment or access to clinical staff. Consent is not required for individual assessments by a school counsellor who is a member of the teaching staff.

Supportive Resources

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