

Preface

As considered here, consultation is an indirect model of delivering psychological and/or educational services. Within this model, a specialist (consultant) and staff member (consultee) work together to optimize the functioning of a client in the staff member's setting and to increase the staff member's capacity to deal with similar situations in the future. In schools, for example, a psychologist may consult with a teacher about a student in the teacher's classroom. The practice of school consultation has burgeoned since its formal introduction into public education during the 1960s. Today, graduate training programs in various specialties of psychology and education require coursework in consultation, and many professionals in these areas spend some portion of their day engaged in consultation.

Consultation can be a powerful tool for delivering specialized services in schools, but only when the consultant possesses a requisite level of skill and sophistication. In preparing this volume, we envisioned its major purpose as reducing the level of naiveté typically experienced by the beginning school consultant. Toward that end, we offer a systematic approach to school consultation that targets much of the information needed for one to consult in a competent manner. The reader should note that our use of the somewhat ambiguous term *school consultant* is intentional and recognizes that consultants working in schools today represent a variety of professional disciplines. The primary intended audiences for this book, however, are school psychologists and clinical child psychologists, although psychologists having other specialties are likely to find its content useful. A clear secondary audience is educational specialists, including counselors, special educators, and school social workers. What the reader must have to benefit from our approach is a solid background in psychology, a content area of expertise from which to draw, and well-developed human relations skills.

We believe the overall method of school consultation detailed in this book is different from others that have been published previously. In stating that it is different, we are not claiming that it is wholly original. Our goal instead has been to incorporate the most useful conceptual and/or empirically supported principles of known consultation approaches into a single model that is particularly relevant to school-based practice. More specifically, the model of school consultation we promote attempts to integrate aspects of the historically separate models of mental health consultation and behavioral consultation, along with principles of interpersonal

influence, social support, and organizational psychology. In our model, the effective practice of school consultation is linked to the accomplishment of three interrelated tasks – the problem-solving, social influence, and support and development tasks.

Structurally, this volume is comprised of three major sections. The first of these consists of four chapters that describe foundational information, including historical and conceptual information (Chap. 1) as well as the contemporary context for school-based service delivery, including tiered systems of intervention and response to intervention (Chap. 2); using interpersonal influence in consultation (Chap. 3); and understanding the school as a setting for consultation (Chap. 4). The second section, comprised of Chaps. 5–8, documents important processes and outcomes of school consultation. Chapters 5 and 6 present our integrated model of consultation, focusing on elements of mental health consultation, behavioral consultation, professional support, problem solving, social influence, and the organizational context. Moving away somewhat from these core elements, Chap. 7 provides information on assessment issues and strategies of particular relevance to consultation, and Chap. 8 describes the importance of and provides practical models for selecting effective school-based interventions. Chapters 9 through 11 form the third section. Key participants in school consultation, teachers and students, are described in Chaps. 9 and 10, respectively. Chapter 11 contains a transcribed consultation case study that illustrates many aspects of school consultation in general and the integrated model in particular. Chapter 12 is an epilog that reviews important points and looks ahead to the future effective practice of school consultation. New to this third edition are Chaps. 2 and 7.

We have been very heartened by the positive reactions of students and colleagues to earlier editions of *School Consultation: Conceptual and Empirical Bases of Practice*. For example, Hintze (1998) wrote: “In reviewing the text, I found myself reflecting on what was being proposed from a variety of perspectives: ‘how much easier this is going to make my teaching,’ ‘this is just the type of book students have been asking for,’ ‘that’s exactly what I experienced as a practitioner,’ or ‘I wish I had a book like this when I was being trained.’” Meyers and Coleman (2004) noted: “Erchul and Martens offer an astute and scholarly discussion of school-based consultation...after reading this thought-provoking book, one is left with an enhanced theoretical understanding of consultation and is thus better prepared to practice with confidence and a clear sense of purpose.” We hope that readers of the third edition will find it just as useful.

We have heard that one of the strengths of the earlier editions lay in its concise presentation of many topics germane to school consultation. That emphasis is retained here, but we also acknowledge there is much more to consultative practice than a single source can adequately cover. Therefore, instructors selecting this book for their graduate-level courses may wish to supplement it with others. We suggest the following sources for deeper coverage of indicated topics: Caplan and Caplan (1993/1999; mental health consultation); Kratochwill and Bergan (1990; behavioral consultation); Sheridan and Kratochwill (2007; conjoint behavioral consultation); Jimerson, Burns and VanDerHeyden (2007; response to intervention); Grigorenko (2008; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004); and Erchul and Sheridan (2008a; school consultation research).

Books are seldom the result only of their authors' efforts, and with this in mind, we wish to express our gratitude to several individuals. Stephanie Asbeck, Priscilla Grissom, and Lynne Myers are thanked for their careful proofreading, editing, and indexing efforts. We also appreciate Blair Johnson's help in preparing Fig. 6.1. We thank Judy Jones, Garth Haller, and other staff members at Springer for their considerable assistance in putting our ideas into print.

Throughout our careers we have been intellectually sparked by the scholarly contributions of Gerald Caplan (1917–2008) and Bertram H. Raven. Gerald Caplan, late Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and originator of the modern practice of mental health consultation, has been a primary influence on our understanding of the interpersonal, organizational, and preventive aspects of consultation. Bert Raven, Professor of Psychology Emeritus at the University of California, Los Angeles, and renowned social psychologist, has greatly enhanced our view of the role that social influence plays in consultation. We are grateful to these gentlemen for both their kindness and insights into human behavior that led us to develop our integrated model of school consultation.

We also wish to acknowledge the many talented doctoral students – now our colleagues – with whom we have collaborated over the years. The diligent efforts and insights of Seth Aldrich, Scott Ardoin, John Begeny, Megan Bennett, Tracy Bradley, Sandy Chafouleas, Teri Chewning, Sheila Clonan, Edward Daly, Florence DiGennaro Reed, Kim Getty, Priscilla Grissom, Andrea Hiralall, Richard Hollings, Mary Cathryn Murray, Lynne Myers, Ami O'Neill, Derek Reed, Susan Smith Scott, Caryn Ward, Michelle Whichard, and Kristen Wilson have contributed immeasurably to the development of our model.

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