Chapter 10
School Counselors and Technology:
Bridging the Gap for Student Success

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ABSTRACT

The use of advanced technology has clearly affected counseling services provided to students by school counselors, as well as how counselors communicate with and support students. The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) has emphasized the importance of school counselors' use of technology and their collaboration with families and educators. It is important for school counselors to understand how technology influences schools so that they can provide the most appropriate and effective counseling services to students. This chapter explores what school counselors need to know to understand the importance of advanced technologies in school settings, as well as how school counselors can utilize diverse technologies, online resources, activities, and computer-based systems in their work with students. This chapter will help educators and counselors develop the knowledge and skills needed to competently address technology-related issues in schools.

TECHNOLOGY AND SCHOOL COUNSELING

School counselors facilitate the well-being of students in K-12 education. Student well-being is a multi-faceted concept incorporating various dimensions, including engagement in learning, social and emotional

well-being, physical health and safety, and supportive relationships (Victorian Department of Education and Training, 2017). To support the well-being of students and improve professional services available to them, school counselors employ technologies when working and communicating with students and their families.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011) has emphasized the importance of school counselors' use of technology and their collaboration with families and educators to support the social, emotional and career development of students, to address the needs of students from multicultural backgrounds, and to facilitate the advancement of online education in graduate-level counseling programs. This chapter reviews the extant literature and research pertaining to the use of technologies and appropriate pedagogy in school counseling and counselor education. The chapter concludes with a discussion of technology-related resources, as well as an overview of limitations and suggestions for the use of technologies in school counseling.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

Social/Emotional Development. It is within the scope of practice for school counselors to provide counseling to students who are struggling with personal, academic, and career concerns (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2015). Students have social/emotional learning (SEL) and development needs which schools can help support if they have the resources (staff and knowledge) to do so. Elias, Tobias, and Friedlander (1999) theorized the following five areas make up the skill set for emotional intelligence:

- Be aware of one own feelings and those of others.
- Show empathy and understand others' point of view.
- Regulate and cope positively with emotional and behavioral impulses.
- Be positive goal and plan oriented.
- Use positive social skills in handling relationships. (p. 202)

The prevalence of student mental health challenges is a very real concern to parents, teachers, and administrators (Even & Quest, 2017). As many as one in five school-aged youth experience symptoms of a mental health condition (National Institute of Mental Health, 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999; World Health Organization, 2004). Researchers have found evidence linking mental health symptoms and impairment of academic performance and achievement (Roeser, Eccles, & Strobel, 1998).

Technology Resources. Technology and computers can be integrated into the school curriculum and the work of the school counselor to enhance the development of SEL of students across grade levels (Elias, Friedlander, & Tobias, 2006). One example of integrating technology is the grant project, "An Asset Building Culture" which had four initiatives (Harrington, Griffith, Gray, & Greenspan, 2016). One of the initiatives included "establishing a robust system of strengths-based social-emotional data collection grounded in sound theory" (Harrington et al, 2016, p. 281). The goal of the grant project was to create change so school counselors could use data to support students' social-emotional, academic, and behavioral development (Harrington et al., 2016). A Protector Factors Index (PFI) was created as an

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