

## **guidance and counseling**

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Guidance and counseling concept that institutions, especially schools, should promote the efficient and happy lives of individuals by helping them adjust to social realities. The disruption of community and family life by industrial civilization convinced many that guidance experts should be trained to handle problems of individual adjustment. Though the need for attention to the whole individual had been recognized by educators since the time of Socrates, it was only during the 20th cent. that researchers actually began to study and accumulate information about guidance.

This development, occurring largely in the United States, was the result of two influences: John [Dewey](#) and others insisted that the object of education should be to stimulate the fullest possible growth of the individual and that the unique qualities of personality require individual handling for adequate development; also in the early 20th cent., social and economic conditions stimulated a great increase in school enrollment. These two forces encouraged a reexamination of the curricula and methods of secondary schools, with special reference to the needs of students who did not plan to enter college. The academic curriculum was revised to embrace these alternative cultural and vocational requirements (see [vocational education](#) ).

Early guidance programs dealt with the immediate problem of vocational placement. The complexities of the industrial economy and the unrealistic ambitions of many young people made it essential that machinery for bringing together jobs and workers be set up; vocational guidance became that machinery. At the same time, counseling organizations were established to help people understand their potentialities and liabilities and make intelligent personal and vocational decisions. The first vocational counseling service was the Boston Vocational Bureau, established (1908) by Frank Parsons, a pioneer in the field of guidance. His model was soon copied by many schools, municipalities, states, and private organizations.

With the development of aptitude and interest tests, such as the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test and the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, commercial organizations were formed to analyze people's abilities and furnish career advice. Schools organized testing and placement services, many of them in cooperation with federal and state agencies. Under the provisions of the National Defense Education Act (1958), the federal government provided assistance for guidance and counseling programs in the public secondary schools and established a testing procedure to identify students with outstanding abilities. The U.S. Dept. of Labor has been an active force in establishing standards and methods of vocational guidance, helping states to form their own vocational guidance and counseling services. The personnel departments of many large corporations have also instituted systems of guidance to promote better utilization of their employees.

Modern high school guidance programs also include academic counseling for those students planning to attend college. In recent years, school guidance counselors have also been recognized as the primary source for psychological counseling for high school students; this sometimes includes counseling in such areas as drug abuse and teenage pregnancy and referrals to other professionals (e.g., psychologists, social workers, and learning-disability specialists). Virtually all teachers colleges offer major courses in guidance, and graduate schools of education grant advanced degrees in the field.

**Bibliography:** See E. Landy et al., *Guidance in American Education* (3 vol., 1966); B. E. Schertzer and S. C. Stone, *Foundations of Counseling* (1980); W. G. Herron, *Contemporary School Psychology* (1984).

Counselors work in diverse community settings designed to provide a variety of counseling, rehabilitation, and support services. Their duties vary greatly, depending on their specialty, which is determined by the setting in which they work and the population they serve. Although the specific setting may have an implied scope of practice, counselors frequently are challenged with children, adolescents, adults, or families that have multiple issues, such as mental health disorders and addiction, disability and employment needs, school problems or career counseling needs, and trauma. Counselors must recognize these issues in order to provide their clients with appropriate counseling and support.

*Educational, vocational, and school counselors* provide individuals and groups with career, personal, social and educational counseling. School counselors assist students of all levels, from elementary school to postsecondary education. They advocate for students and work with other individuals and organizations to promote the academic, career, personal, and social development of children and youth. School counselors help students evaluate their abilities, interests, talents, and personalities to develop realistic academic and career goals. Counselors use interviews, counseling sessions, interest and aptitude assessment tests, and other methods to evaluate and advise students. They also operate career information centers and career education programs. Often, counselors work with students who have academic and social development problems or other special needs.

*Elementary school counselors* provide individual, small-group, and classroom guidance services to students. Counselors observe children during classroom and play activities and confer with their teachers and parents to evaluate the children's strengths, problems, or special needs. In conjunction with teachers and administrators, they make sure that the curriculum addresses both the academic and the developmental needs of students. Elementary school counselors do less vocational and academic counseling than high school counselors do.

*High school counselors* advise students regarding college majors, admission requirements, entrance exams, financial aid, trade or technical schools, and apprenticeship programs. They help students develop job search skills, such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. College career planning and placement counselors assist alumni or students with career development and job-hunting techniques.

School counselors at all levels help students to understand and deal with social, behavioral, and personal problems. These counselors emphasize preventive and developmental counseling to enhance students' personal, social, and academic growth and to provide students with the life skills needed to deal with problems before they worsen. Counselors provide special services, including alcohol and drug prevention programs and conflict resolution classes. They also try to identify cases of domestic abuse and other family problems that can affect a student's development.

Counselors interact with students individually, in small groups, or as an entire class. They consult and collaborate with parents, teachers, school administrators, school psychologists, medical professionals, and social workers to develop and implement strategies to help students succeed.

*Vocational counselors*, also called *employment counselors* or *career counselors*, usually provide career counseling outside the school setting. Their chief focus is helping individuals with career decisions. Vocational counselors explore and evaluate the client's education, training, work history, interests, skills, and personality traits. They may arrange for aptitude and achievement tests to help the client make career decisions. They also work with individuals to develop their job-search skills and assist clients in locating and applying for jobs. In addition, career counselors provide support to people experiencing job loss, job stress, or other career transition issues.

*Rehabilitation counselors* help people deal with the personal, social, and vocational effects of disabilities. They counsel people with both physical and emotional disabilities resulting from birth defects, illness or disease, accidents, or other causes. They evaluate the

strengths and limitations of individuals, provide personal and vocational counseling, offer case management support, and arrange for medical care, vocational training, and job placement. Rehabilitation counselors interview both individuals with disabilities and their families, evaluate school and medical reports, and confer with physicians, psychologists, employers, and physical, occupational, and speech therapists to determine the capabilities and skills of the individual. They develop individual rehabilitation programs by conferring with the client. These programs often include training to help individuals develop job skills, become employed, and provide opportunities for community integration. Rehabilitation counselors are trained to recognize and to help lessen environmental and attitudinal barriers. Such help may include providing education, and advocacy services to individuals, families, employers, and others in the community. Rehabilitation counselors work toward increasing the person's capacity to live independently by facilitating and coordinating with other service providers.

*Mental health counselors* work with individuals, families, and groups to address and treat mental and emotional disorders and to promote mental health. They are trained in a variety of therapeutic techniques used to address issues such as depression, anxiety, addiction and substance abuse, suicidal impulses, stress, trauma, low self-esteem, and grief. They also help with job and career concerns, educational decisions, mental and emotional health issues, and relationship problems. In addition, they may be involved in community outreach, advocacy, and mediation activities. Some specialize in delivering mental health services for the elderly. Mental health counselors often work closely with other mental health specialists, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, and school counselors. (Information on [psychologists](#), [registered nurses](#), [social workers](#), and [physicians and surgeons](#), which includes psychiatrists, appears elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

*Substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors* help people who have problems with alcohol, drugs, gambling, and eating disorders. They counsel individuals to help them to identify behaviors and problems related to their addiction. Counseling can be done on an individual basis, but is frequently done in a group setting and can include crisis counseling, daily or weekly counseling, or drop-in counseling supports. Counselors are trained to assist in

developing personalized recovery programs that help to establish healthy behaviors and provide coping strategies. Often, these counselors also will work with family members who are affected by the addictions of their loved ones. Some counselors conduct programs and community outreach aimed at preventing addiction and educating the public. Counselors must be able to recognize how addiction affects the entire person and those around him or her.

*Marriage and family therapists* apply family systems theory, principles, and techniques to address and treat mental and emotional disorders. In doing so, they modify people's perceptions and behaviors, enhance communication and understanding among family members, and help to prevent family and individual crises. They may work with individuals, families, couples, and groups. Marriage and family therapy differs from traditional therapy because less emphasis is placed on an identified client or internal psychological conflict. The focus is on viewing and understanding their clients' symptoms and interactions within their existing environment. Marriage and family therapists also may make appropriate referrals to psychiatric resources, perform research, and teach courses in human development and interpersonal relationships.

**Work environment.** The work environment can vary greatly, depending on the occupational specialty. School counselors work predominantly in schools, where they usually have an office but also may work in classrooms. Other counselors may work in a private practice, community health organizations, day treatment programs, or hospitals. Many counselors work in an office where they see clients throughout the day, although counselors may frequently be required to provide services out in the community.

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