The Importance of Policy Research and Evaluation for International School-Based Counseling

COE Research Conversation
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Presentation Overview

1. This could be an auspicious time for school-based counselors.

2. There is a significant role for program evaluation and policy research.

3. A new school-based counseling evaluation framework now exists to support evaluation work.

4. There are a number of international initiatives working to promote school-based counseling.
Pre-pandemic there were over 90 countries seriously considering the implementation of school-based counseling.
School counselors in the US have historically struggled to gain a foothold in schools.
Reasons

• Role Ambiguity
• School principal deployment of school counselors
• Lack of resources
• Lack of understanding/acceptance regarding the importance of mental health support for children
Who Took “Counseling” out of the Role of Professional School Counselors in the United States?

This time could be different.
The evidence and the argument.
Numerous national and international studies.
Use databases or surveys.
Show increases in mental health problems from 2019 to 2020 or 2019 to 2021.
Mental health issues that cut across almost all studies:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicide
- Trauma
Protecting Youth Mental Health
The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory

The insufficient numbers of school counselors nationally makes it difficult to adequately address the mental health needs of K-12 students.

The school counselor to student ratio should be 1:250 in each school.
Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs

Significant expansion of the number of school counselors across the U.S.
Removal of administrative tasks from the school counselor workload.
Maintain counselor to student ratios at 1:250 for all school counselors.
Why program evaluation?

• To improve programs and services (formative evaluation)
• For program effectiveness and accountability (summative evaluation)
An Evaluation Framework for School Counselors
Benefits of the Evaluation Framework
Benefit 1
Meets the professional program evaluation standards (Yarborough et al., 2010) widely accepted by the program evaluation enterprise.
Benefit 2
Incorporates the use of qualitative methods.
Benefit 3
Includes formative evaluation as a valued purpose.
Benefit 4
Embraces stakeholder engagement.
Benefit 5
Fosters impetus and process for culturally-responsive evaluation.
Two Limitations

- Lack of Time
- Lack of Training
Pillars of the Framework
Pillar 1
Carol Weiss (1998)
Pillar 2
Trevisan and Carey (2020)
Pillar 3
Lambie, et al. (2019)
Policy Research
International Society of Policy Research and Evaluation for School-based Counseling (ISPRESCE)
Membership
approximately 250 current members worldwide
• School counseling faculty
• School counselors
• Deans
• Policy researchers
• Policy advocates
ISPRESC Leadership

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ISPRESC Projects
• Develop evaluation model for school counselors and federal government (Korea)

• Trauma Informed Education (TIE) for School Counselors (Nigeria)

• Develop policy briefs (India)
With school-based counselors conducting effective program evaluation and strategic policy research school-based counselors could be poised to gain that elusive foothold in schools as an essential professional.
Thank you!
References


