

College Readiness Intervention at the High School Level

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College and career preparation has been strongly focused on the high school setting because of the high need for postsecondary education or training. Unfortunately, some high schools in Virginia are not making college and career readiness a priority of their curriculum even though it is greatly needed. This current proposal examines a need to have a small prevention group where the highest risk high school juniors come together to discuss issues they are likely to face during their first year of college.

The first year of college can be challenging for many students according to various researchers. There are three important issues that affect students' transitions into the college setting: one's sense of belonging, behavioral risks, and interpersonal stressors (Pittman & Richmond, 2008; Fromme, Corbin, & Kruse, 2008; White et al., 2006; Ross, Niebling, & Heckert, 1999). The reader will see how each of these three domains are highlighted in the prevention group which is discussed in the next section of this proposal.

The first significant issue is a student's lack of belonging within the university. Pittman and Richmond (2008) found that a student's sense of belonging in the university setting during the first year of college is important as it leads to less internalized behaviors over time. By having a sense of belonging within the university, the student is more likely to have higher self-esteem. Typically, if students have higher quality friendships, then they are less likely to exhibit negative externalized behaviors over time. By having a stronger sense of belonging to one's friends, then students are more likely to exhibit positive perceptions of their personal social acceptance as well as their academic ability (Pittman & Richmond, 2008).

The second significant issue is the behavioral risks that are present once students enter the college setting without any parental control. Researchers have found that alcohol and

marijuana use along with risky sexual behaviors increased during the transition to college (Fromme et al., 2008). Students who attend rural high schools or those who plan to live in a college dorm are more likely to participate in unsafe drinking behavior. These behavioral risks likely come about because of the decreased amount of adult supervision, the feeling of having more freedom, and the increased availability to the substances (Fromme et al., 2008). White et al. (2006) also talks about the higher risk of alcohol use during the transition from high school to college. The researchers suggest that having fewer friends who engage in that behavior decreases the likelihood that students will engage in risky drinking behavior. The researchers also suggest that parental monitoring decreases heavy drinking (White et al., 2006).

The final challenging issue for students found in the first year of college is intrapersonal stressors. Researchers found that the most common stressors associated with the transition into the first year of college has to do with a change in sleeping and eating patterns, taking on new responsibilities, having a greater workload, understanding financial responsibilities, and having to adjust to new social engagements (Ross et al., 1999). These stressors may come from not understanding what the college culture is and how to prepare themselves for their newfound freedom and responsibility. That is why the topic of being prepared for life in college will be included within this group.

Through the previous research, the reader can see how students are negatively impacted during their first year of college due to each student's behavioral, social, and personal needs. Small group therapy sessions in high school would be beneficial to address these issues before they occur. Overall, we need the help of school counselors to implement these groups for higher risk students who may not have the help and support they need to apply to colleges and to understand what going to college entails. The research shows how important counselor-student

interaction is, especially in terms of a student actually applying to college (Bryan, Moore-Thomas, Day-Vines, & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011). This group will be a small group session because, in reality, it would be difficult to implement such an intensive system within the entire school. If a school counselor can work with a small number of the highest risk students, then they will be able to share their experiences with one another and realize that they are not alone in feeling worried or anxious about this process.

Setting, Clientele, and Issue

The setting of this group will take place in a low-income high school, and the sessions will be led by the school counselor in the counseling office or an empty classroom. The school counselor will work with seven to ten junior students who display a need for additional college readiness preparation. A student can qualify to attend the group based on four different criteria: has an interest in attending college, displays at-risk behavior, has low social support at school and at home, and exhibits high anxiety within the high school setting. The students can be male or female and any race/ethnicity as long as they meet at least three criteria, with having an interest in college being a requirement. The school counselor will gather information based on a student questionnaire and teacher input to determine which students would meet these criteria and which students would benefit the most from engaging in this group. This particular clientele is chosen because of the research presented in the introduction section which includes a sense of belonging, behavioral risks, intrapersonal stressors, and how to apply and be ready for college. If students show a lack of knowledge in these core areas, then they should be able to attend this group and feel prepared when it comes to visiting and applying for college during their senior year.

Group Type, Duration, and Format

Group Type

Because this is a prevention group and the goal would be to eliminate the stressors that come along with the transition into college, the students need to be directly aware of the issues they could face. Therefore, this group will primarily be psychoeducational, but there will be counseling involved as students bring up stresses and anxieties they have about leaving home or becoming more independent. When the counseling opportunities present themselves, the school counselor should stay in the here-and-now and process through the feelings and emotions the students have about the topic. During the psychoeducational component, students would still have the opportunity to process through the material by asking questions and telling one another how they feel they will be able to handle the issues that come up during college.

Duration of the Group

After selecting the students that are eligible to attend the group, a letter will be sent to their parents a week before Christmas break of the students' junior year explaining what the group will be about and the goals that their children would accomplish during this time. This group would take place every week for one hour. Because of time constraints that teachers face, students should not be pulled out of their core classes. Instead, the school counselor should try to meet with them during their lunchtime combined with an elective, like P.E. This college readiness group would begin in January of the spring semester after the students return from Christmas break and would go until the end of the school year. When the students return for their senior year, the school counselor would meet with them weekly for one month to follow up about the college process since they will be applying during that semester. This would be a

closed group since the counselor will predetermine who will be able to attend the group (but, the school counselor can display flexibility depending on resources and the number of students who have already signed up for the group).

Format of the Group

The college readiness group will be split into four phases during the spring semester of the students' junior year and a final phase during the first semester of their senior year. Each phase will have a psychoeducational component that goes along with the topic.

Phase one. The first phase of the group will be about risky behaviors that some first year college students engage in. The psychoeducational component will be about alcohol/marijuana use and risky sexual behaviors. After discussing these issues, the group leader will open up the discussion to how the students feel about those behaviors. This phase will last approximately two weeks.

Phase two. The second phase of the group will be about the importance of building social support groups in high school and in college. The psychoeducational component would include details about how having social support is helpful within the college setting as well as how to become involved in various organizations throughout college. The group leader will also use this time to suggest that the current group of students communicate with each other on a regular basis when they attend college so they can support each other in that way even if they do not attend the same university. This phase should last approximately four weeks.

Phase three. The third phase of the group will be about the intrapersonal stressors the students may face during the transition into their first year of college. The psychoeducational component would be addressing the various stressors they may face: change in sleeping and

eating patterns, taking on new responsibilities, having a greater workload, understanding financial responsibilities, and having to adjust to new social engagements. During this phase, the group would discuss important time management and conflict resolution strategies. This phase should last approximately four weeks.

Phase four. The fourth phase of the group will focus on teaching the students how to apply for colleges and how to prepare for the college environment in general. During this phase, the group would discuss the application process, visiting different schools, how to apply for financial aid, and how to be independent in the college environment. This phase should last approximately four weeks.

Final phase. The final phase of the group takes place when the students return for their senior year in the high school. This would happen during the month of September. This time would be used to closely examine the stresses and anxieties the students may be facing with the application process fully underway. This phase should last approximately three to four weeks.

College Culture and its Importance

Before beginning the group, the school counselor would make sure he or she is aware of the different admission requirements for all types of colleges because he or she would then be able to better advise his or her students. The school counselor should have a list of the students who will participate in the group so he or she can evaluate the various cultural aspects of the members and come prepared to discuss that as well (Bryan, Holcomb-McCoy, Moore-Thomas, & Day-Vines, 2009). School counselors should be setting their high school students to high standards along with promoting a college-going culture (Bryan et al., 2009).

Conley (2007) discusses the importance of college readiness in a high school setting. He states that the college ready student will be able to understand the expectations of college courses as well as be prepared to “get the most out of the college experience” through structural and cultural understanding of the college environment – this includes social domains as well (Conley, 2007). He talks about the transition from high school to college being difficult especially because of the newfound independence that students have. It is expected that high school students have to spend at least two times the amount of time preparing for a college class as opposed to high school (Conley, 2007). Helping prepare students with this type of work ethic is imperative, and this will be addressed throughout the goals of the group which are presented below.

As Conley (2007) mentions, it is important to have a college going culture within the school and the school counselor should keep this in mind as he or she is setting up the group. Conley, McGaughy, Kirtner, van der Valk, & Martinez-Wenzl (2010) also state the importance of a college-going culture and students learning about self-management skills and academic behavior. Finally, they argue that it is important for the students to understand the complexity of applying and preparing for college (Conley et al., 2010). This is something that will be addressed throughout the phases of the group as well.

Conley (2007) discusses components that define a comprehensive college readiness program. These components include: key cognitive strategies, academic knowledge, academic behaviors, and contextual skills and awareness (Conley, 2007). For this specific group, school counselors will focus on academic behaviors and contextual skills and awareness because the group will discuss self-monitoring skills (which aligns with academic behaviors) as well as how college could be classified as a system and a culture (which aligns with contextual skills and awareness). One of the most important aspects is for the students to be able to interact

successfully with their peers, teachers, and parents as well as identify and master new ways of thinking about things, all of which will be discussed throughout the group (Conley, 2007).

Group Goals and Procedures

Although there is not a vast amount of research-based college readiness interventions at the high school level, there is a lot of research on how to incorporate college readiness in the school and what topics should be addressed. The goals align with each phase that is mentioned in the above section. Each goal will be listed along with how the research is incorporated into each phase.

Goal Number One for Phase One

The first goal corresponds with phase one of the overall group. Goal number one is that students will be able to understand the risky behaviors associated with the first year of the college experience and they will be able to express their feelings about the topic. As mentioned in the introduction, students transitioning to college are more likely to engage in unsafe drinking and sexual behaviors (Fromme et al., 2008). This phase of the group would primarily be psychoeducational and last approximately two weeks.

Week 1. During this week, the school counselor will discuss the above information about risky behaviors. The students should be aware that college students who live in a dorm are more likely to engage in these risky behaviors because of the decreased amount of supervision, greater freedom, and increased availability to use substances (Fromme et al., 2008). The counselor will present the facts from the research, explain how to minimize risk (by not drinking alcohol at parties, having safe sex, etc.), and encourage discussion among the members about how they feel about these behaviors.

Week 2. This week would be to discuss how social support affects students engaging in risky behavior. The school counselor can explain that students who surround themselves with people who do not engage in unsafe drinking or sexual behaviors are less likely to engage in the behavior themselves (White et al., 2006). The remainder of the session would allow for the school counselor to lead a discussion and/or roleplays about what the students can do in cases where they feel pressured to engage in unsafe activities.

Goal Number Two for Phase Two

The second goal corresponds with phase two of the group. Goal number two is that students will be able to identify social support groups that they can go to for help throughout the college process, and the students will be able to identify ways in which they can have support during their first year of college as well. Research suggests that interventions in high school should focus on encouraging pro-social interactions and parental involvement, so that this what these weeks will revolve around (White et al., 2006). During this phase, the counselor would discuss skill development and cultural understanding with the students. This should last approximately four weeks.

Week 1. To help initiate conversation between the students so the group can feel they will be supported by one another, the counselor should use suggestions from Bryan et al. (2009) which could include talking about the student's cultures and give them homework to have a study group outside of the group setting. During the first week, the counselor would ask that students bring something to share about where they come from. This could be hometown, religion, race/ethnicity, or whatever they would like to bring to the table so everyone would have the opportunity to learn more about each other's cultures and hopefully grow more comfortable with one another. At the end of this session, the group members should be encouraged to have

study groups outside of the group setting in order to build social support with each other before going to college.

Week 2. Researchers have also suggested that all students should be encouraged to apply to college and that students should communicate with their parents about college (Conley et al., 2010). By encouraging students to talk with their guardians about college and the college process, students will have the opportunity to further build support before they leave for college. To do this, the school counselor will encourage students to begin having conversations with their parents about what we discuss in group or some other aspect of their life at school that their parents generally do not hear about. If a student is strongly against communicating with his or her parents or another family member, the counselor would encourage him or her to speak about this with another older adult. If that does not work, the counselor would encourage the student to have these conversations with a close friend he or she can trust.

Week 3. Parker, Hogan, Eastabrook, Oke, and Wood (2006) discuss the importance of students having an understanding of positive emotional intelligence as it relates to more positive intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities. To incorporate this into my group, the school counselor would define emotional intelligence which means to be able to perceive and understand your own emotions as well as others emotions (Cherry, 2016). By doing this, students will feel more in tune with their own emotions. It will likely create better relationships with peers because the students can learn to be empathetic towards others experiencing different emotions. It should be explained that not all students experience emotion in the same way. For example, if someone was talking about death in class, another student could become upset because they recently lost a family member. This student would become visibly upset, but no one may understand why she or he was getting so emotional because no one else had experienced death so recently. The students

would then be asked to explain different things that might make them scared, happy, sad, mad, angry, joyful, ecstatic, and any other emotion word that we have time for. This would provide yet another opportunity for the students to get to know each other a little better but also provide the opportunity to see that some people view emotions differently than they do.

Week 4. During the last week of this phase, the leader will summarize what the last three weeks have been about: building relationships with peers and with guardians. The group will have an opportunity to express any other concerns as far as building support with one another, their peers, or their families and that is what this week will be based on.

Goal Number Three for Phase Three

The third goal corresponds to phase three of the overall group. Goal number three is that students will be able to identify stressors associated with going to college. They will also be able to carry out stress management techniques, time management techniques, and conflict resolution techniques. Intrapersonal stressors during first year of college that are most common include “change in sleeping, vacations, change in eating, new responsibilities, increased workload, financial difficulties, and change in social activities” (Ross et al., 1999). The researchers suggest that there be a “stress intervention” that teaches students about having new responsibilities, appropriately dealing with time management, appropriately dealing with conflict management, and being able to deal with unexpected stressors (like getting a low grade) (Ross et al., 1999). This phase will include discussing these stressors, developing skills to address the stressors, and carrying out role plays of stressful situations over the course of four weeks.

Week 1. One of the things Bryan et al. (2009) suggests in their research is the importance of creating and maintaining a schedule. This also addresses Ross et al.’s (1999) claim that new responsibilities and increased workload is a stressor during the first year of college. Because

scheduling can be stressful for students, this week will be used to help prepare students for maintaining a hectic schedule, especially with more coursework and classes to go to throughout college. The group will talk about the importance of having a planner to keep track of due dates and assignments. The homework for students this week will be to outline their current schedule in a planner provided by the school counselor (if funds are available at the school) with their due dates and what they need to work on for the next two weeks. If there is time at the end (and throughout the group if necessary), the students can talk about the kinds of stressors that come up for them while talking about scheduling.

Week 2. As mentioned in the previous phase, having higher emotional intelligence relates to more positive interpersonal skills. Additionally, emotional intelligence relates to being able to manage stress and being adaptable to new situations (Parker et al., 2006). During this week, the counselor will review the term emotional intelligence and ask the students to explain what they learned in the previous session. The group will then discuss how emotional intelligence may be useful as they are adapting into a new situation (i.e. college) and having to manage stress in that environment. The counselor will discuss with them how it is completely normal to feel stressed and anxious in a new environment and we will have a discussion to examine those initial feelings. The group will also talk about the importance of self-care throughout college and the psychological resources that will be available for the students in a college environment if they ever begin to feel too emotionally distraught during their first year.

Week 3. McDonough (2005) explains that counselors can significantly help when it comes to preparing for college by teaching anxiety techniques and helping students understand the range of options available to them. This week would be utilized to explain techniques that the students can do on their own to minimize anxiety if they begin to feel it during the rest of high

school and in college. Some techniques could include breathing exercises, doing something you enjoy, talking to a trusted individual, using a stress ball, and many others as well. The students would have the opportunity to discuss other techniques that they have thought of or that works for them, and if there is time at the end, they would practice some of the techniques.

Week 4. This would be a summary week where the group would discuss the stressors that will likely be present once they enter college. The group will talk about the importance of scheduling, being aware of one's emotions, and anxiety techniques. This time would be utilized to engage in multiple role plays in order to practice anxiety techniques and to practice conflict resolution techniques. Some of the conflict resolution techniques could include how to navigate group projects in college, how to handle financial difficulties, and how to engage in conversation with professors at the school.

Goal Number Four for Phase Four

The fourth goal corresponds with phase four of the group. Goal number four is that students will learn about the college process in general including, the college application process, the college admissions process, financial responsibilities once in college, and what it will mean to be independent from their families. This phase of the group will primarily focus on skill development in the general college process and will be four weeks long.

Week 1. Bryan et al. (2009) discusses the importance of being able to present a self-assessment of one's readiness for college. This could be achieved by having students locate websites for colleges and other information associated with the college process. During this week, the group will spend time looking at a few different college websites (ones that the students self-select) and how to navigate through them. The counselor will talk about where to find the average SAT scores, GPA, tuition cost, and majors that are available. The counselor will

generate conversation with the students about what they find to be surprising, scary, and exciting about the information that we have looked at so far. The student's homework will be to look up at least two more colleges and be willing to present about them the next week.

Week 2. During this week, the students will present about their findings from the colleges they researched. This conversation will continue the maintenance of college culture by discussing the colleges and the cultural differences that are within each college they looked up (Conley et al., 2010). After this, the counselor will talk about the college application process and how and when they should begin completing applications.

Week 3. This week will be entirely about loans and the financial information the students will need to be aware of. Perna (2008) discusses the importance of teaching students about loans and the importance of having information ready for their guardians as well, especially in lower SES settings where they might not feel like they have the financial means to go to college. Perna (2008) mentions that it is important to explain that not everyone has to get a loan, but it is good for everyone to be aware of the loan process. During this week we will discuss the FAFSA process. The group will also discuss the importance of scholarships and the counselor will have a list of scholarships to provide to them during this time. The counselor will talk about how important it will be to apply for financial aid at each university because it will cover loans as well as grant money. Finally, the group will discuss the pros and cons of being more financially independent from their guardians and what issues this could raise.

Week 4. Because there is a significant amount of information to cover in this phase, the fourth week will be to answer any questions the students may have but to also make sure the students thoroughly understand the college application process. The group will also talk about the importance of visiting colleges and what types of questions to ask while going on college

tours. Towards the end of this session, the leader should gauge whether or not he or she feels the college process material has been covered in full and all questions from the students have been answered. If there could be more time spent to answer questions or go further into detail about the application and financial process, then an additional week should be added if the resources and time are available.

Goal Number Five for the Final Phase

The fifth goal that corresponds with the final phase of the group is more open-ended. As mentioned before, the final phase of the group takes place when the students return for their senior year in the high school that would last approximately three or four weeks. Goal number five is that students will be able to openly express the anxieties they are having about applying to college since they are close to filling out applications. This phase would be up to the group leader's discretion with how much time he or she feels should be spent with the students. This phase could also have shortened groups (at least thirty minutes) if necessary. This time should be spent examining the stresses and anxieties the students may be facing with the application process fully underway.

Multicultural Components

Because this school will likely be in a lower SES setting, this multicultural section will focus on the demographic that would be most present in an inner city school. Bryan et al. (2009) says that African Americans and females are more likely to seek out counseling services in school. This is interesting especially since African American high school students are less likely to attend college. Counselors should take this into consideration while selecting students for the group. African Americans and females may be more likely to join the group, but counselors

should keep in mind that even though they are likely to seek out school counseling services that they might not attend college even with the support.

Another multicultural consideration that needs to be considered is that African American and Latino students have expectations that they will not succeed in college (Constantine, Kindaichi, & Miville, 2007). In order to combat this negative perception, the school counselor needs to continue holding his or her students to high standards so the students can get to a point where they hold themselves to high standards in college. Constantine et al. (2007) also mentions that African American and Latino students' anxieties could decrease if they receive appropriate and encouraging messages about race and ethnicity from the people who surround them: teachers, peers, counselors, parents, etc. Because the group focuses on peer and parental support and also encourages cultural conversation throughout the group process, these students would have less anxiety about being able to succeed in the college setting. Furthermore, by providing African American and Latino students with encouraging messages about race and ethnicity and by allowing them to explore their cultural identity, it could help to eliminate the number of obstacles the students perceive they will face when it comes to selecting majors and moving towards a career. It would be beneficial to have conversations around the discrimination they may face in the workplace and in college as well (Constantine et al., 2007).

Group Process Issues

With this group, there could be issues of trust, especially in the beginning when everyone is getting to know each other. The school counselor will explain that the group should be confidential where what is said in the room stays in the room; however, this does not mean that students will not share the information with their friends. In order to promote a trusting environment, the students would have to be willing to make the commitment for the group to be

confidential. Additionally, because the students are minors, the school counselor needs to mention that parents do have the right to know what is being discussed throughout the group. The counselor would explain that he/she would only let the parents know about the topics that will be discussed in the group. If the parents were to ask specific information from their child, counselors would try to limit that information as much as possible to give them an overall picture of how their child is doing in the group.

Along with confidentiality concerns, there could be issues of shame as well, especially if one individual seems to be more ahead in the college readiness process than others. Not only this, but some students may attend the group and feel that they are not as equipped to go to college (i.e. lack of friends, lack of participation in extracurricular activities, etc.) as some of the other students. The school counselor should utilize these opportunities to lessen the shameful feeling by normalizing some of the things the students might be facing. This would provide an opportunity to explain how students bring different strengths to the table – if one student is more ahead in the college readiness process and another student is more ahead in having more social support, then both students would be able to help each other in the areas they are lacking.

There could also be a lack of interpersonal skills, especially since having low support is one of the factors in deciding who will be in the group or not. Because of this, the students may have a difficult time engaging in communication with each other towards the beginning of the group, but after the first couple of weeks, the students will become more comfortable with one another and this concern will cease.

The final concern that could potentially arise is culture-related. It would be ideal to have members in the group from various cultures so everyone can talk about different viewpoints and perspectives. This could create issues where the individuals do not want to discuss their culture

because they are worried about others judging them. Creating a nonjudgmental environment so the students would not feel this way would be important for the counselor to establish early on in the group process.

Procedures for Recruiting, Selecting, and Preparing Members

As mentioned above in the Setting, Clientele and Issue section, the counselor will evaluate who will attend the group by four different criteria including having an interest in college, being more likely to display at-risk behavior in college, displaying low social support, and having high anxiety. These criteria were chosen based on the research that is provided in the introduction section. The students can be male or female and any race/ethnicity.

Group members are selected based on their answers to a questionnaire that is given to each junior student who displays an interest in attending college after high school. Whoever fills out the questionnaire already meets the first criteria of wanting to go to college. The questionnaire will ask questions to determine the students' social support at home and at school, students' willingness to engage in risky behavior, and a few questions that measure anxiety. If students meet at least two of the criteria that the questionnaire addresses (since attending college will already be evaluated), then they would be invited to attend the group. If there are more than ten students who qualify, counselors would talk to teachers to determine which students display a higher need for the group. If it is determined that all students would benefit from the group, the group leader might need to determine if he or she can lead two different groups per week.

After determining the students who would participate in this group, the counselor would send home informed consent forms to the parents and the students so they could determine together if the student should attend the group or not. Upon receiving the signed forms, the counselor should bring the students into the counseling office before the actual phases begin to

discuss group expectations with them. At this time, the counselor would explain what the group will entail, and this will be a time to create group rules and guidelines. The students should direct this conversation so they can ask any questions that they may have and create the type of environment they would like.

Group Evaluation Procedures

For the evaluation process, the counselor will provide the group members with exit slips throughout each phase of the group. These exit slips will examine whether or not the students met the goals for each phase and will determine what the students liked and disliked about each section. At the end of phase one, the members will receive an exit slip that asks what risky behaviors they learned about that could happen during the first year of college. They will also be asked to explain how they felt about the topic. At the end of phase two, the students will be asked to identify social support groups within and outside of the school that they can go to for help throughout the college process but also once they get to college. At the end of phase three, students will be asked to list some of the stressors they learned about with going to college. They will also be asked to explain the stress management and time management techniques that were discussed throughout the group. At the end of phase four, the students will answer questions based on what they learned about the college application process and about the loan and financial process. They will also answer a question about how prepared they feel for the college application process. At the end of the final phase, students will answer questions about how prepared they feel for going into college next year. They would also be able to provide feedback for their overall experience in the group.

After the four phases are completed, the counselor would know that the group was successful if every student applies to college and feels good about going to wherever they

choose. Furthermore, counselors should know if this was a successful group based on the reactions by the students. If the students want to attend the group each week, then that shows success of the group as well because of the length of the group. After the final phase, the counselor would ask the students if they would be willing to provide their email so he/she could follow up with them after their first year of college to see how the group may have helped each student. It would be ideal if the counselor also encourages the students to email him or her and keep him or her updated throughout their first year of college. It may be difficult to follow up with the students once they are in college (i.e., the students do not want to respond, an email address changes, etc.), but an attempt should at least be made.

Ethical Concerns

There are a few different ethical considerations to keep in mind while conducting this group: confidentiality, group work, assessment, and culture. According to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010), section A.2. addresses confidentiality. This would be a confidential group where what the students say stays in the group room. This might not always be possible because parents will want to know how their kids are doing in the group, and as counselors, we would probably have to provide them with general information. Another issue that school counselors should be aware of is when the teachers and administrators want to know how the students are doing. In this case, the information provided by the student should be strictly confidential unless there is a threat of harm. The group members would also have the ability to share what is in group with individuals outside of the group setting as well which could disrupt confidentiality.

Another ethical concern is group work which is listed in section A.6. of the ASCA ethical standards. With this in mind, school counselors should take all measures to make sure a student

does not experience psychological or emotional discomfort during the group (ASCA, 2010). For this group specifically, I do not foresee this happening, but it is always a possibility. Another aspect that goes along with this concern is notifying the parents. ASCA (2010) suggests that parents should be notified if their child is in a small group. As mentioned, parents would have to sign a consent allowing their student to participate, but there could be difficulty in terms of sharing the appropriate information with the parents that their student might share throughout the group.

Another ethical concern comes from section A.9. which addresses assessments in the school setting (ASCA, 2010). The group leader should make sure that the initial questionnaire adheres to appropriate measures to examine one's anxiety and social support levels. The school counselor should also take care in interpreting the results to make sure the questionnaire is interpreted in the most appropriate way.

A major ethical consideration comes from section E.2. of the ethical standards for school counselors: multicultural and social justice advocacy (ASCA, 2010). The school counselor may not be aware of culturally diverse institutions, so the counselor would need to be sure to think about this before leading this group. Along with this, school counselors would need to make sure he or she is providing the most equitable environment for the students within this group which could be difficult if the school counselor does not feel culturally competent.

Conclusion

Incorporating a college readiness group in a low-income high school would be essential because of the lack of resources that are associated with a low SES school. This group would provide school counselors a way to directly affect the students who want to go to college but might be struggling socially and emotionally. Fortunately, this group would be inexpensive, so it

would likely be approved to use in a high school. Ultimately, if this group was implemented in the school setting and the students were showing great strides of success, then the administration would be likely to provide more resources in creating a college-going culture for an at-risk population of students.

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