

4



Program Consultation

A program is defined as “an organized collection of activities designed to reach certain objectives” (Royce & Thyer, 2010, p. 5). The goal of school social work program consultation is to meet the needs of school populations unable to participate or succeed in school life using traditional services and pathways. Consultation focuses on targeted issues and stressors that hinder positive school participation.

The primary practice method entails screening and evaluating the multiple steps involved in planning and implementing traditional or special school programs. The change process is guided by professional literature and research methods. School social work program consultants bring their expertise on the interactions between vulnerable school populations and environmental forces, including the community, school, and home, which create barriers to school program success. Consultants value information and data that provide evidence linking program goals and activities with program outcomes and achievements.

Background

One of the first federally funded government studies on the impact of consultation services in school systems found that helping school administrations develop, plan, and implement programs was one of the least frequently implemented models of consultation, while clinical consultation was the most frequently implemented consultation model (Behavior Science Corporation, 1973). This finding was consistent with research sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) that also found direct service to children to be the primary method of school social work practice (Costin, 1969).