

The Professional School Counselor and HIV/AIDS

(Adopted 1988; revised 1993, 1999, 2001, 2006)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

The professional school counselor promotes educational efforts related to Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Disorder (HIV/AIDS). The professional school counselor collaborates with students, parents, staff and the community to prevent the spread of this disease.

The Rationale

Adolescents and pre-adolescents are in the developmental stage in life when they are exploring their identity. Professional school counselors have the opportunity and responsibility to provide students with accurate health information and to help them develop healthy attitudes and habits. HIV/AIDS information and education is vital for all individuals.

Professional school counselors communicate health information as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program, complying with federal, state and local laws and policies as well as the *ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors*. Federal laws, regulations and court cases prohibit discrimination on the basis of HIV status.

The Professional School Counselor's Role

Professional school counselors collaborate with school health personnel to provide counseling, support and educational programs for students, staff, and parents. Clear, succinct and accurate information concerning HIV/AIDS and any related complications is vital to all students. The professional school counselor focuses on HIV/AIDS as a disease and not as a moral issue and keeps abreast of current recommendations and resources.

The professional school counselor is familiar with school policy regarding HIV/AIDS. The professional school counselor also becomes familiar with resources available to assist students and families dealing with HIV/AIDS issues.

The professional school counselor may advocate for the implementation of an HIV/AIDS education program as a part of the comprehensive school counseling program or the school's health curriculum. The HIV/AIDS education program includes instruction for students, parents, and staff promoting healthy living and responsibility to self, family and society. Specific elements may include general information about HIV/AIDS, including knowledge of:

- behavior that puts people at risk for HIV/AIDS
- methods of HIV/AIDS transmission
- HIV/AIDS-related civil rights issues
- HIV/AIDS prevention efforts and
- accurate information dispelling myths about HIV/AIDS.

Summary

The professional school counselor promotes educational efforts related to HIV/AIDS. The professional school counselor collaborates with students, parents, staff and the community to prevent the spread of this disease. Professional school counselors approach the issue through education and prevention efforts, keeping abreast of current recommendations and resources.