

ABSTRACT

Child or student counselling is a process in which the counsellor attempts to understand and helps to clarify those feelings in a child or student that may, and can impede growth, maturation, and overall well-being. The counsellor in the school has to regularly confront sensitive issues in the lives of a pupil or student, families and members of teaching and support staff. Issues include love relationships, depression, suicidal attempts, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual activity, parent-child relationships and self-injurious behaviours. The manner in which these issues are handled has profound effects on the well-being of pupils and students, their relationship with teachers and family, the school's relationships with families, school culture, and on learning and general achievement. It must be emphasized that the school principal as the chief executive bears the ultimate responsibility for all school programmes including the school guidance and counselling programmes. To fulfil the academic and other responsibilities, principals must understand the counselling programmes, procedures and work with the counsellor in the school to ensure they series maximally benefit pupils and students within their jurisdiction. In particular, principals and counsellors maintain amicable relationships with pupils and students, teachers, parents and support staff. Principals consult with the counsellor about the handling of cases which present particular difficulties and others that touch upon the school's interests. This includes acute cases of emotional disturbance, illness, indiscipline, crime, violence and drug abuse. This paper advances that both the principal and counsellor require training in counselling and principals should make use of counselling skills while operating within counselling professional ethical and legal guidelines.