
Preface

The School Counselor's Guide to ADHD will help school counselors find ways to work more effectively with children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in the school environment.

It is intended to serve as a practical how-to guide for counselors with little or no experience working with children with ADHD and also for more knowledgeable counselors who need to refresh their knowledge or are interested in learning more about this disorder. Other readers who encounter children with ADHD on a regular basis, including school psychologists and school administrators, will find this book helpful. The information in this book can also be of value to students and trainees working on their administrative, school psychology, and school counseling credentials.

School counselors will find this book useful because it outlines challenges they may encounter while working with these special students. It is geared toward school-based treatment in contrast to agency-based treatment programs for children with ADHD. Schools are often skipped over by outside professionals when treating these special children. However, schools may be the only setting where treatment is available for many families of children with ADHD because of financial considerations or, for some, personal resistance to outside psychotherapy because of the stigma still associated with seeing a mental health specialist. Families who have the financial resources to access private psychotherapy services are often, but not always, better acquainted with support services in the community and better educated than those who seek help at public treatment programs. Consequently, many families with limited resources look primarily to the child's doctor or the school to help their child be more successful.

We will be describing an integrated multimodal approach to working with children with ADHD that is pragmatic, nondogmatic, and user friendly. Among the hallmarks of our approach are (a) the importance of communicating with other caregivers and professionals who work with

the child; (b) maintaining a spirit of collaboration with the teacher, parents, and children; and (c) maintaining a positive, optimistic stance that instills hope and empowers the teacher, parents, and child even when they experience setbacks, disappointments, and mistakes.

The population of children with ADHD is heterogeneous, and contrary to popular stereotypes, children with ADHD differ from one another in many ways. Academic and behavioral interventions need to be tailored to the child's individual needs. Accordingly, children with ADHD must be approached in different ways, and it is impossible to know in advance what will be the best approach in working with each child. As an educator, you must have an open mind, a flexible attitude, a willingness to go with the flow or change directions when needed, and, frankly, be adventurous and realize that interventions are often guided by trial and error. The key is to figure out what works best for a particular child at a particular point in time. To be successful, school counselors and support staff need a menu of different options to choose from. There is no one best treatment method or approach for everyone with ADHD.

The only guideline we encourage is that educators do what appears to work best for the particular child they are seeing. If you are looking for a cookbook method, this book is not for you. What we offer are helpful suggestions, guidelines, and techniques that you can use as you work with these special children. But these techniques will need to be adapted and modified to fit the child with whom you are working. We hope that what you read in this book will empower you to more freely exercise your own judgment and release your thinking from the confines of past approaches, many of which claimed to be the one and only effective way to deal with children with ADHD.