

PROGRAM PLANNING: USE-OF-TIME ANALYSIS

Description

School counselors need to know how their time is being spent to best determine ways to improve program delivery and identify possible program delivery impediments. Moreover, how time is spent needs to be analyzed and shared with important stakeholders. ASCA recommends school counselors spend at minimum 80 percent of their time providing direct and indirect services to students and that school counselors complete the use-of-time assessment twice each year.

Where to Begin

Document daily activities

- Create a system allowing you to identify which events occurred as planned and which had to be cancelled or rescheduled. Be sure to include reasons for cancellations and reschedules.
- Highlight those items that need to be rescheduled to ensure they happen.
- Add unplanned events to the calendar.

Complete the use-of-time assessment twice each year

- Two times each year be especially meticulous about documenting everything on your weekly calendar.
- Analyze the week carefully and calculate exactly how you spent your time. The use-of-time template in the “The ASCA National Model” may help.
- The ASCA use-of-time five-day calculator template will calculate your use of time and create charts of your data.
- Use this information as an advocacy tool for your time and program.

After completing the time analysis, answer these questions:

- How close am I to allocating at least 80 percent of my time in direct and indirect services to students? What supports and/or detracts from spending 80 percent of my time in direct and indirect services?
- Is the amount of time allocated to any particular service delivery the most effective use of my time?
- Are the selected delivery methods and strategies the best use of school counseling time that will lead to the accomplishment of identified goals?

Definitions

Direct Services to Students (DSS)

Direct Services to Groups of Students

Instruction (I): teaching the school counseling curriculum to students focused through the lens of the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors to help all students maximize their potential by enhancing academic, career and social/emotional development and improving outcomes of achievement, attendance and discipline; may occur in classrooms, large and small groups, or individually

Appraisal and advisement (AA): helping students understand their abilities, values and career interests and attain the ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success; often results in students establishing personal goals and developing future plans; may occur with individual students, small groups and in classroom settings

Counseling (C): the professional assistance and support provided to a student or small group of students during times of transition, heightened stress, critical change or other situations impeding student success; short term and based on counseling theories and techniques effective in a school setting

Indirect Services to Students (ISS)

Referrals (Ref): occur when students’ needs extend beyond the training and/or responsibilities of the school counseling role; referrals are as varied as the needs presented by students; examples include, but are not limited to:

- Academic support referrals: tutoring
- Career support: college planning websites, employment training
- Social/emotional support: community agencies

Consultation (Con): the process of providing information, opinions and recommendations to individuals who can support a student’s need or seeking information from an expert about student needs

Collaboration (Col): the process in which multiple individuals work toward a common goal and share responsibility for the associated tasks

- Teaming and partnering: working with staff, parents, businesses and community organizations
- School/district committees: serving on committees or advisory boards to promote student success and assist in generating schoolwide and district support for the school counseling program
- Parent workshops: facilitating or organizing informational sessions about student developmental issues to address students’ needs and enhance attainment of school counseling curriculum
- Community partnerships: establishing partnerships with community members and organizations to strengthen the school counseling program
- Crisis response: working with administrators, teachers, other school staff, families and community members to provide immediate and follow-up intervention to meet urgent needs and prevent situations from becoming more severe

Program Planning and School Support

- Define, manage, assess: includes all tasks associated with defining, managing and assessing the program
- Fair-share duties: includes those duties assigned to everyone in the building that help with the safety and efficiency of the school (bus duty, etc.). The important distinction is that school counselors are doing their fair share, as are others in the building.

Non-School-Counseling Tasks: Duties or tasks outside the school counselor's role and impeding the implementation of a school counseling program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- coordinating cognitive, aptitude and achievement testing programs
- disciplinary actions/investigations or assigning discipline consequences
- teaching classes when teachers are absent
- supervising classrooms or common areas
- providing long-term therapy or counseling to address psychological disorders
- coordinating schoolwide individual action plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards
- serving as a data entry clerk

| Use of Time Do's and Don'ts | |
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| Do's | Don'ts |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Maintain detailed weekly calendars that track all you do.■ Periodically analyze a weekly calendar (at least twice each year) to assess your actual use of time.■ Develop codes for identifying the types of services delivered on your weekly calendars.■ Aim toward the 80/20 use of time. 80 percent in direct and indirect services; 20 percent in program planning and school support.■ Assess where you currently are, then gradually, but intentionally, move toward 80/20 time usage.■ Analyze your calendars for time wasters (ineffective or inappropriate meeting participation, too many others controlling your calendar, lack of proactive planning, etc.)■ Leave some open time each day to accommodate interruptions and developments. Perhaps 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes each afternoon will suffice.■ Enlist others in support of your planned schedules. Consider front office personnel who can protect your schedule from unplanned drop-ins. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Don't work without a planned weekly calendar. Create schedules for yourself.■ Don't assume planned schedules are impossible in your setting.■ Don't overschedule. Allow some brief periods of unscheduled time each day to cover those issues that develop.■ Don't be pulled off schedule by quasi-emergencies that actually could wait until a break in your schedule.■ Don't get pulled into lengthy on-the-spot conversations. Acknowledge the need, and invite individuals to make an appointment as soon as possible.■ Don't overlook your administrators when working toward better management of your time. Enlist their support. They are experts at managing scheduling and interruptions. |