

Canadian School Counselling Week 2022

Key Messages

Canadian School Counselling Week recognizes the contributions of the School Counselling profession to the personal, social, educational, and career development of students at all grade levels. School Counsellors are instrumental in supporting the mental health and well-being of children and youth in Canada.

The school counselling profession continues to be a vital component for student success during a global pandemic. According to a survey conducted by the Mental Health Commission of Canadaⁱ, the biggest challenges that today's youth are facing are:

- feeling isolated and lonely (48%);
- closures of in-person schools and moving to remote learning (33%);
- limited access to mental health and other health-related supports (9%);
- fears of acquiring COVID-19 for oneself or loved ones (2%);
- lack of employment opportunities (1%);
- and other challenges (6%).

Whether school counsellors are supporting students on-site in schools or remotely through tele-counselling, they continue to be instrumental in supporting student well-being and achievement.

School Counselling Week 2022: Who We Are and How We Help

CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTÉRAPIE

#SCHOOLCOUNSELLORSHelp

SUPPORT
INTERVENE
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FEBRUARY 7 - 11, 2022
MARKS THE 8TH ANNUAL CANADIAN SCHOOL COUNSELLING WEEK

School Counsellors **support** the academic, social, and emotional growth of students:

- When children learn about their emotions for as little as 30 minutes a week, both their behaviour and their academic success improve. ⁱⁱ
- Expanded school counselling services in elementary schools is associated with improvements in student learning, behaviour and mental health ⁱⁱⁱ

School Counsellors **intervene** when additional supports are required for students' mental health, academic outcomes, and overall well-being:

- Most mental health signs and symptoms usually appear during adolescence^{iv}
- In one study, school counsellors played a critical role in increasing the graduation rate from 49% to 78.8% in three years in a historically low-performing school^v
- School counsellors are shown to be effective at delivering meaningful bully prevention programs^{vi}
- School counsellor interventions led to 75% higher self-efficacy scores compared to groups without intervention^{vii}
- Social/emotional learning programs delivered by school counselors resulted in greater rates of academic achievement in students^{viii}
- Meta-analysis shows school counsellor interventions demonstrated an overall weighted effect size of .30^{ix}
- The Province of Nova Scotia has provided funding to support 350 Nova Scotian youth who are currently under-represented in the workforce, which includes and highlights the role of individual counselling for student success.^x

School Counsellors **advocate** for students to help them reach their goals in a safe and inclusive school environment:

- School counsellors play a critical role in improving systemic power, privilege, and racism in Canada's schools^{xi}
- 14.7% of Canadian children have a school accommodation^{xii} and school counsellors collaborate in the creation of individualized student plans
- School counsellors provide leadership in suicide prevention at schools which includes classroom guidance, screening, and referrals for mental health services^{xiii}
- The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA) aims to raise awareness about the critical role career development plays in mental health and wellness.^{xiv} Career development continues to be an important component of a comprehensive school counselling program and practice.

Remote learning during the pandemic poses greater challenges for low-income families, and some groups such as visible minorities, recent immigrants, and Indigenous peoples are overrepresented and more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19. School counsellors assist families during remote learning by bridging the gaps and directing families to the necessary resources and supports.

As school counsellors, we believe positive mental health and well-being are vital for student learning. It is with this vision for our students that we strive to build a national identity within our profession. The School Counsellors Chapter of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Associations connects with school counsellors from across Canada. The Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC) is a nationally recognized standard through CCPA that provides evidence of qualified training and counsellor experience. CCPA would like to assist schools in ensuring that all children and youth have access to trained school counsellors in every school. Through comprehensive school counselling programs, early intervention and education, and ongoing support by trained professionals, school counsellors can make a positive difference in the lives of children and youth, both as independent professionals and as part of student support teams and referral agents.

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- ⁱ Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2020). LOCKDOWN LIFE: Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19 on Youth in Canada Ottawa, Canada. Retrieved from https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/drupal/2021-02/lockdown_life_eng.pdf
- ⁱⁱ Brackett, M. A., Rivers, S. E., Reyes, M. R., & Salovey, P. (2012). Enhancing academic performance and social and emotional competence with the RULER feeling words curriculum. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 22, 218–224. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1041608010001214>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Reback, R. (2010). Schools' mental health services and young children's emotions, behavior and learning. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 29 (4), 698-727. doi: 10.1002/pam.20528
- ^{iv} HEADSTRONG: School Based Activities Toolkit, Mental Health Commission of Canada. Retrieved from https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/School_Based_Activity_Toolkit.pdf
- ^v Salina, C., Girtz, S., Eppinga, J., Martinez, D., Blumer Kilian, D., Lozano, E., Martinez, A., Crowe, D., De La Barrera, M., Mendez, M., Shines, T. (2013). All hands on deck: A comprehensive, results-driven counseling model. *Professional School Counseling*, 17 (1), 63-75. doi: 10.1177/2156759X0001700112
- ^{vi} Midgett, A., Doumas, D., Johnson, A. (2018). Establishing school counselors as leaders in bullying curriculum delivery: Evaluation of a brief, schoolwide bystander intervention. *Professional School Counseling*, 21 (1), 1-9. doi: 10.1177/2156759X18778781
- ^{vii} Bardhoshi, G., Duncan, K., Erford, B. (2018). Effect of a specialized classroom counseling intervention on increasing self-efficacy among first-grade rural students. *Professional School Counseling*, 21 (1), 12-25. doi: 10.5330/1096-2409-21.1.12
- ^{viii} The Role of Social/Emotional Mediators on Middle School Students' Academic Growth as Fostered by an Evidence-Based Intervention
- ^{ix} Whiston, S. C., Tai, W. L., Rahardja, D., & Eder, K. (2011). School counseling outcome: A meta-analytic examination of interventions. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 89 (1), 37-55. doi: 10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00059.x
- ^x https://childrenfirstcanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CFC_PolicyReport_Final.pdf
- ^{xi} *Racism in Canada's Schools*, Canadian School Counsellor, September 28, 2020. Retrieved from <https://canadianschoolcounsellor.com/fall2020/fall2020-features/racism-in-canadas-schools/>
- ^{xii} Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0816-01 Selected mental health, economic and education indicators to better understand the impact of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic on children (various reference periods)
- ^{xiii} Erickson, A., & Abel, N. R. (2013). A high school counselor's leadership in providing school-wide screenings for depression and enhancing suicide awareness. *Professional School Counseling*, 16 (5), 283-289. doi: 10.1177/2156759X1201600501
- ^{xiv} Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. (2019, November). The Critical Role Career Development Plays in Mental Health and Wellness. *Career Matters | Issue Paper # 4*. Retrieved from <https://www.ccpa-accp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Issue-Paper-4-EN.pdf>