

Middle and High School Advisory Program: Advisor Handbook

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Part 1: Introduction

What is an Advisory Program?

Advisory is a program in which students meet regularly with a caring faculty member during a scheduled period in the school day. In order to effectively serve the specific student population, the activities that take place during advisory vary from school to school. However the underlying goal of most advisory programs is the same: to provide each student with consistent support and guidance from a member of the school staff. This adult, called the advisor, advocates for his/her group of students and runs the day-to-day activities of the advisory program. These activities range from the implementation of a curriculum to facilitation of a discussion to the distribution of important school information. See the "Advisor Job Description" section for specific duties at your school.

Why is an Advisory Program Important?

Perhaps the most talked about benefits of an advisory program are the positive relationships that are created. Advisories help to build a sense of community in schools, which is important for preventing alienation. Furthermore, studies have shown that students' educational success is based on academic as well as social support. Rose Burkhardt (2005), the former president of the National Middle School Association, wrote in her article *Advisory: Advocacy for Every Student*:

If teachers expect students to be engaged learners, they must communicate to those students that they are cared for, respected, welcomed, and appreciated. Young adolescents need affirmation. They need support. They need to know that those who are charged with educating them are also concerned about them.

In addition to improving students' current academic performance, advisors can help students plan for their future academic careers. Many important decisions are made during the middle school and high school years about whether or not to graduate from high school and attend college. Advisory can serve as a time for discussion about future goals and aspirations. Advisors can assist students in making decisions that will help them achieve their life goals. Additionally, through advisory students can receive timely information about deadlines and procedures for graduating from high school and applying for jobs and colleges.

Finally, advisors often benefit from advisory programs as much as students do. Educators work hard everyday to make a difference in students' lives. The advisory program provides school personnel with another opportunity to get to know students well and help them in a significant and meaningful way.

What is the Purpose of this Handbook?

Educators generally possess many of the qualities that are necessary for advisors to have, such as a desire to help students and ability to lead group discussions. However, the way in which advisory sessions are conducted and the situations that may arise in advisory can be vastly different than in a typical classroom. As an advisor you may find yourself in new situations and dealing with complex student issues.

This handbook is a brief introduction on how to successfully and comfortably serve as an advisor for grades 7 - 12. It does not offer all of the answers, nor does it come jam-packed with specific activities. Rather it provides you with information and topics to study and address. This handbook can be used as part of the advisor training and it can be kept in the classroom for future reference.

Part 2 of this handbook outlines the most crucial aspects of the structure and set-up of the advisory program. You should make sure to carefully read this section and fully understand the advisor responsibility. The “Advisor Skills” addressed in Part 3 are skills that you can continue to develop over time in order to serve successfully in your role as an advisor. Although all skills addressed in this section are important, the topics do not need to be read in order. As situations arise in advisory, the relevant section can be read and discussed among the school faculty. Part 4 addresses some concerns for advisors that may come up during advisory. Next, in Part 5, some example advisory sessions are outlined, which allows you to think critically about what a successfully advisory session would look like. Finally, Part 6 provides additional resources for advisors and students.

Part 2: Foundation of the Advisory Program

About this section:

Each school has a different student population and different needs. For this reason each school's advisory program is unique in its mission, goals, advisor responsibilities, and format. The following topics should be thoroughly analyzed and determined by the person, or people, in charge of the advisory program at each individual school. This "Director of Advisory" may choose to fill in the information for you, by using the digital file to click and type in the box, or you may be asked to write in the following information by hand. Either way, make sure to fully understand each of these topics before taking any further steps!

Advisory Program Mission Statement:

Advisory Program Goals:

Advisor Job Description

When beginning any task, it is important to understand exactly what is expected of you. The first thing you must understand about your role is that you are NOT a counselor. You are a mentor, a support, and an advocate for your students. Whenever you feel that a situation or concern is outside of your comfort zone, seek out support from an administrator or colleague. Below you will find specific information about your role and responsibilities as an advisor.

Advisory Format

The format of every school's advisory program is different to best suit the needs of the school and students. Below you will find information about how the advisory program at your school is set up. You will learn about the time frame of advisory and the types of activities that will take place during advisory.

Time Commitment:

Advisory Activities:

Confidentiality

Building a trusting relationship with your students can be a very difficult and time-consuming task. One way in which trust can be built is through the establishment of confidentiality for the group. Confidentiality means that any personal information that is shared during the advisory session will be kept “secret” and will not be shared with anyone outside of the group.

There may be times when you, as the advisor, have an obligation to break confidentiality. These “limits to confidentiality” include any time that you are suspicious that the student has been, is being, or will be harmed by him/herself or someone else. Additionally, you must break confidentiality if the student poses a threat to another person. If you are suspicious that one of these things may be true (you do not have to be certain), you should follow the school and district policies about reporting this information to the appropriate people. If you are unsure of whom to report to, you may consult with a counselor, administrator, or trusted colleague. However, since you will have firsthand knowledge of the situation, you will need to be the person to report the threat of harm.

If you are unsure of whether or not you should break confidentiality, it is best to seek help from another school professional. You may speak with a trusted member of the faculty without breaking confidentiality by omitting the student’s name and any other identifying characteristics. Breaking confidentiality can be a very difficult thing to do. Just remember, when a student is in danger it is in the student’s best interest to break confidentiality and get that student the support he or she needs.

Confidentiality is a concept that you should discuss with your students as soon as possible, preferably during the first meeting. Share with them the concept of confidentiality and let them know when you would have to break confidentiality.

In addition to your responsibility of confidentiality, the students in the group should also take a vow of confidentiality. At the establishment of the advisory group, each student should openly agree to confidentiality. Students may be skeptical of the concept at first. In order to address this uncertainty, you can ask the students about their past experiences with keeping secrets. Also, students may become more accepting of the idea if they work together to create a plan for what should happen if a student breaks confidentiality. For example, the person who breaks confidentiality may have to complete a formal apology to the group. You should remind the group about the concept of confidentiality periodically throughout the year.

Here is one suggestion of what you may say to your students on the first day:
"Everything we discuss in advisory will be kept secret and no one will be allowed to talk about the personal information that is shared in advisory outside of this room. The only time that I will not be able to keep personal information secret is if I believe that you or someone else is in danger of being harmed. In this case I will need to get help, because I want to keep you safe."

Here are some example follow-up questions:

- 1) Do we all agree to this arrangement?
- 2) What will be challenging about keeping personal information secret?
- 3) Have there been times when someone told you that they would keep something secret but didn't? If so, what did you think about that?
- 4) What should be the consequence if someone breaks this agreement?

Part 3: Skills for Advisors

Active Listening

Active listening is an important skill for advisors to use during advisory. Additionally, the students in the advisory group would benefit from using active listening skills. These are skills that you should teach and practice with your students each day. Active listening is not as easy as it sounds; it takes focus, patience, and practice! Here are some of the main components:

1) Non-verbal communication:

- Nonverbal communication goes both ways. Both the listener and speaker should practice observing what is being said through their own and others' body language. Eye contact, body language, and facial expressions can say more than words. Some people appreciate constant eye contact while other people are uncomfortable with eye contact. Personal preferences should be openly observed and discussed.

2) Paraphrasing and Summarizing Statements

- When a person is speaking they may not truly know if you understand what they are saying. By simply repeating a statement back to the speaker, or by rewording their statements, you can convey to the speaker that you are following and understanding what is being said. This can truly create a connection between both parties.

3) Clarifying Questions

- A clarifying question is a question that asks the speaker to provide more information in order for the listener to gain a better understanding of what is being said. You may think you know what the speaker is saying, but you may have missed the main point. By asking clarifying questions every now and then you can gain a deeper understanding. Moreover, asking clarifying questions can accomplish the same goal as paraphrasing and summarizing: to demonstrate to the speaker that you are with them.

4) I Statements:

- Students, and even advisors, must practice using I statements in advisory. At times students will disagree and may inadvertently insult each other. Instead of yelling at each other, students must express how they feel using “I” statements, not “You” statements. In using I statements students should use the following format: I feel ____ when you ____ because _____. Using I statements allows people to express their feelings without verbally attacking each other. This is strong conflict resolution skill that all students should learn and try to utilize.

Modeling Behavior

As educators have learned through the years, modeling behavior is often a more teaching powerful tool than direct instruction. You may have heard of the Bobo Doll Experiment. In this experiment researchers found that children who observed aggressive behavior acted out aggressively, and those who observed non-aggressive behavior showed little aggressive behavior. This experiment demonstrates the power of modeling.

One of the most important lessons that students may learn in advisory is how to relate to others in an appropriate and meaningful way. In advisory, students have a chance to interact with people outside of their typical social group. Advisory can be a great time for students to learn new social skills without any formal instruction. As the advisor, you can help facilitate the students' interactions to ensure that they are learning positive behaviors from each other.

As the adult in the room, students will naturally look to you as the authority figure and will watch how you act and react. For some students you may be one of the most positive role models they have in their lives. Students will learn appropriate interactions by watching you. They will observe how you speak to and interact with students and other adults. If you are co-leading an advisory group you will have a wonderful opportunity to model appropriate interactions (see "Co-Leading Advisory Sessions").

You should also model appropriate communication with your students. As stated in the "Active Listening" section, active listening is a skill that advisors and students should use together. Formally teaching students about active listening may be beneficial, however, they will learn even more by watching you model the behavior.

Although at times there will not be visible proof that they are learning these skills, they will observe your behavior everyday and will internalize it over time. You must be patient and believe that in the long run your good example will have a large positive impact on your students.

Facilitation Skills

As the advisor, one of your main responsibilities may be to facilitate discussions among students, whether formally or informally. Your job is not to instruct students on course material, but rather your job is to guide them in viewing situations from all directions and allowing them to come to their own conclusions. At the beginning of each discussion, be sure to remind students about confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality (see the “Confidentiality” section).

Generally you will begin the discussion by posing a question or setting up a situation around which the discussion will revolve. Throughout the discussion you can ask follow up questions to the initial discussion topic. For example, you can start by having the students discuss the scenario itself. Then you can follow up by asking them what they think about the situation. Finally, as a wrap-up question, you can ask them how they can relate the scenario or topic to their lives. When ending a session it is important to use a wrap-up question or statement. This allows the students to understand that the session has concluded, to feel that they have been heard, and to encourage them to take their new learning outside into their lives.

Another role of the facilitator is acting as a non-judgmental observer. You should use your active listening skills, including body language, clarifying questions, and paraphrasing. You should try to stay away from comments that will stunt the conversation. For example, telling someone that they are “right” or “wrong” is a good way to end the conversation, as the students will feel that the correct answer was given or that they don’t want to give an incorrect answer. Allow the students to decide for themselves what they think about each others’ comments. Also, as an “observer”, self-disclosure should be used sparingly and thoughtfully. You should only self-disclose if you feel that it will add to students’ understanding. For more help on this concept read the “Self-Disclosure” section.

You will need to provide structure and cohesion to the discussion. Students often go on tangents when asked to have a discussion. Sometimes when students get off-topic they have

very interesting and worthwhile discussions. However, at times the topics they discuss do not have much relevance or importance in the students' learning. When this happens, you will need to redirect the students to the question or situation at hand. Keep in mind, too, that you are still in charge of enforcing school rules. If the conversation changes to a topic that you do not feel comfortable with, you have the right to stop the conversation completely.

Also, the structure of the advisory session can greatly impact how well the discussion goes. For example, arranging the chairs or desks in a circle allows the students to see each other and to communicate with each other easily. Typically, this helps to keep conversations moving. However, other room arrangements can also work well. Before beginning each session, consider the topic that will be discussed. Is it better to have a discussion in a large group, small group, or pairs? As a facilitator, it may be helpful to change the format of the discussions to keep students' interest and attention.

As the facilitator, your positioning in the group should also be considered. If you choose to put the chairs in a circle, you may choose to sit with the students or not. Sitting with the students can help increase their connection with you. However, if you choose to sit in the circle, keep in mind that this discussion is all about the students learning from each other. You are not there to teach, but rather, to guide and support the students.

Finally, during these conversations, silences can feel awkward and many facilitators feel the need to fill in these silences. However, silence can have a powerful impact on a discussion. It allows previous comments to "sink-in" and it allows the students time to think and reflect.

Establishing Trust

Many advisors want to jump right in and begin holding discussions and helping students with their questions. However, building trust is a very important first stage. Trust is the key to having meaningful discussions in which students share their thoughts and ideas. Below are suggestions for building trust and handling the, sometimes uncomfortable, initial meetings.

During the first several sessions, it is best to stick to low risk activities. These activities are called “Ice-Breakers,” because the purpose of these activities is to work past any uncomfortable feelings in fun and exciting ways. For example, students can complete a “trait scavenger hunt” in which they ask each other who has a pet or whose favorite food is ice cream. “Ice-Breaker” resources are listed in “Resources for Advisory”.

Another way to create an open and trusting environment is to work with the students to create the rules and procedures for advisory. Students will take more ownership of the group if they are part of the decision making process. This includes the establishment of the rules of confidentiality. As mentioned in the “Confidentiality” section, establishing a climate of trust begins with the promise of confidentiality.

If you notice that your group is having difficulty building trust (if members are hesitant to express themselves), you may choose to openly state your observations and explore the reasons for this with the students. Addressing issues openly and immediately will help build group cohesion. Also, by sharing your observations and thoughts, you are showing the students that you can be trusted as part of the group as well.

Finally, even if trust is strongly established at the beginning of the year, it needs to be reestablished throughout the year. Sometimes when students share a personal experience, they can become worried about how they will be viewed. Students should be reminded about the rules of confidentiality. Again, the advisor can openly state these observations and let the group discuss the reasons for mistrust.

Advocating for Students

Being an advocate for your students means helping them stand up for themselves. You will help your students figure out what they want and how to achieve it. In short, an advocate is a person who wants the best for his or her students and will support them in getting it.

As the advisor, one way that you will advocate for your students is by collaborating with the students' teachers. For example, if a student is having difficulty in class, they often benefit from speaking directly with the course teacher. However, many middle and high school students have not developed the skills necessary to talk to authority figures comfortably. At times, you may find that after rehearsing what they will say with you the students will be able to approach their teacher. However, you may also find that your advisees cannot or will not approach other adults to advocate for themselves. In these situations, you can offer to go with the student or you may go on your own (with the students' approval).

As the students' advisor, or advocate, you should also work collaboratively with parents. At the beginning of the year you may choose to call home to establish a relationship with the parents. You can explain to parents your role and your goals as an advisor. Getting to know the parents and teachers of your advisees will help you to serve as a better advocate.

Here are a few tips on how to work collaboratively with parents and teachers:

- 1) Develop a relationship with them before an issue arises.
- 2) Work together on developing ideas and solutions.
- 3) Do not be confrontational or place blame if there is an issue.
- 4) Try to understand how the student operates in the classroom or at home in order to see the situation from the other person's point of view.
- 5) Use your active listening skills (from the "Active Listening" section).

Academic Advising

As a student's advisor, you will have a more comprehensive view of the student's academic performance than any other professional in the school. Not only will you be able to review your students' report card, but also you will have knowledge of what the students are doing in their classes day to day.

One of the things that you can, and should, do is to learn the graduation requirements. You should know what courses the students need to take to graduate and what grades they need to pass the classes. Students often do not know or understand the graduation requirements and do not know which classes to take or why they were assigned certain classes. If you understand the requirements, you can help students choose classes that will move them toward graduation. Students will still be required to meet with their counselor to discuss their course choices. However, you will be another support (or a safety net) for your students as they work toward graduation. Moreover, you can help students understand the importance of the classes they are taking and why they need to do well.

Another important activity for advisors to do is review student report cards with the student present. Allow the student to talk to you about what they are happy about and what they need to work on. This will accomplish three very important goals: 1) you will know which areas to praise for each student, 2) it will allow the students time to reflect on their own work, and 3) it will help students set goals. You can help your advisees set academic goals, which should be specific and attainable. You can help your students create realistic goals and support them in achieving them. For example, if a student earned an F in math, it may be unrealistic for that student to bring the grade up to an A by the end of the week. Instead you can help that student set small goals, such as turning in every math assignment for an entire week.

Co-Leading Advisory Sessions

In some models of advisory, a specific type of collaborative relationship is required, the co-advisor. In this model, two advisors work together to oversee a group of students. This collaborative relationship requires strong cooperation and communication skills, as well as patience.

Co-advisors must be provided with an opportunity to meet together before the first advisory session. In this meeting you and your co-advisor should spend time getting to know each other. You should discuss what strengths you believe you can bring to the advisory group, and areas in which you will need some support. You should be honest so you can support and learn from one another. Also, you should discuss your expectations for advisory and how you foresee it being run. For example, how structured would you like the sessions to be, how should the chairs be arranged, and how should time be spent?

Even after this initial meeting with your co-advisor, it is very beneficial to continue to meet to share thoughts, suggestions, and concerns. However, unless your school sets aside specific time to do this, it can be very difficult for co-leaders to continue to meet. Talking with your co-advisor is a very important part of the advising process and should not be underestimated. One option would be to take a moment at the beginning of each session to plan the day's activities with your co-leader and allow the students to watch the process. They will learn about goal setting and planning. Also, taking the last minute of the advisory period to decompress with your co-leader will save you future stress.

When two people are asked to work closely together, conflicts are bound to arise. If the conflict arises while you are in an advisory session, you can use the disagreement as a meaningful teaching moment. Your students can observe how this disagreement unfolds and how it is handled. They will learn productive conflict resolution by seeing it modeled.

Part 4: Possible Concerns

Self-Disclosure

When trust is established your students will share stories with you and you may become a confidant for them. You will learn a lot about your students. You will know about their friends, family, and grades. The students will, in turn, want to know about your life. This can be a tough situation for professional adults. You will want to bond with your students. On the other hand, you don't want to share more than you are comfortable with, after all, you may have these same students in your academic classes.

So, just how much should you disclose to your students? Your district and school policies still apply in advisory, so you want to be aware of what the school allows in terms of conversations. But beyond "school rules," no one can tell you exactly how much and what information to share about yourself with your advisees. You need to establish for yourself what you are willing to share with your students.

Always keep in mind that the purpose of advisory is to support students. Too much self-disclosure from the advisor can turn the focus from the students to the advisor. In order to determine what you are willing to disclose always keep in mind the purpose of self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is meant to be a powerful way to build trust, bonding, and deepen students' understanding of a topic. Two questions you can ask yourself are, "What impact will my self-disclosure have on the group? How will my self-disclosure benefit the students?"

Take a moment now and think about what topics you are comfortable sharing with your students. It is a good idea to think about this so you will not be *too* caught off guard when your advisee asks you, "have you ever..." or "what do you think about...?"

Student Participation

Many advisors worry, “What if my students won’t talk?” This is a valid concern as it does happen from time to time, even to the best advisors. However, if you are prepared with a few strategies, you are bound to get the students to participate.

One key component of getting students to talk is arranging the room in a format that is conducive to discussions. It’s difficult for students to feel that they are having a discussion with each other if they are sitting in rows and facing forward. Putting the students in a circle is a great format for large group discussions. During the first few sessions it may take a while for the students to get into a circle, but once they catch onto the routine they will begin to do it automatically. You will probably find that on certain days or for certain activities, students are not participating in a large group discussion. In these instances, you can break students up into small groups or into pairs. If you keep some variety in the discussion format, it should keep the students’ attention and they will participate more.

If talkative students suddenly become quiet or do not participate, there may be a trust issue. “Establishing Trust” was discussed previously in this handbook. From time to time trust comes into question and needs to be reestablished. One example of when this may happen is when someone breaks confidentiality or has a conflict with another student in the group. At these times, go back and review the “Establishing Trust” section. Students need to feel like advisory is a safe environment to share their thoughts without being ridiculed or having their opinions and ideas shared with the entire school.

Many advisors wonder what should be done if just one student does not participate. If this happens it would be beneficial for the entire group for you to take the individual student aside and speak to him or her about how he or she is feeling. You may find that the student is either uncomfortable sharing with the group or just generally a quite person. If the student is not comfortable in the group, you will want to find out the source of discomfort so you can change

an aspect of the group or help the student work through the issues. If you find that the student is just generally quiet, you can explain to the student that everyone would benefit from hearing his or her interesting thoughts. You can come up with some topics that he or she would be comfortable discussing. You can then tailor one or two discussions to that topic and allow the student to begin adding comments when he or she is ready.

One final concern that advisors often have is just the opposite of the quiet student, the overly talkative student. When a student dominates discussions, not only does it keep other from sharing, it often creates tension among the other members of the group. If the students all feel comfortable and have built a strong level of trust, often the other students in the group will tell the overbearing student to stop talking. This becomes a powerful teaching moment in which you can discuss feelings openly by using I-Statements. However, if this does not happen, you have a few options for how to handle the situation. You can take the student aside and talk to him or her about limiting the number of comments and why this is important. You may also choose to bring up the issue to the group. You can start a session by saying something about the dynamics of the group such as, "Have you noticed how each member of our group has taken on a role? What role do you feel that you play?" Your third option would be to try to call on students more often instead of allowing the students to jump in at their own free will.

Crisis Situations

Schools face different types of crises from time to time. One type is a community-wide crisis, in which a tragedy affects a large number of students. Another type is personal student crisis. Since students often feel most comfortable talking about personal issues during advisory, you want to have an idea of how to respond when students come to you in crisis mode. Before anything else, you must take care of yourself! If a situation is too difficult for you to handle, seek out help. Like the flight attendants say before every flight, in case of emergency be sure to put your oxygen mask on before helping the children around you. If you are not in a healthy state-of-mind, you will not be able to assist your students effectively.

When a tragedy hits that affects the entire campus, your school may ask advisors to help support the students in some way. Hopefully you will receive detailed responsibilities from the administrators at your school, but two of the most important things you can do are to keep the students calm and help avoid spreading rumors. Sometimes students just need someone to listen to them. You can serve this very important purpose, however, do not allow the students to speculate about uncertain facts. Rumors tend to escalate the situation and they are not helpful for anyone. You can reassure your students that when you know all the details, you will discuss them openly.

Also, you should wait until you receive instructions from the administration about how to deliver the facts of the situation. If you do not feel comfortable delivering upsetting news, you are encouraged to call in a counselor for help or to ask for a script to read to the students. Remember, you are not responsible for providing the students with counseling. If students are excessively upset, send them to the counselor or other student support personnel. Finally, since you will get to know your students and their backgrounds, you should refer students that you foresee having a difficult time dealing with the tragedy to the counselor. For example, if you

know that a certain student has experienced a similar situation in the past and that old feelings are likely to reemerge, seek outside support for that student.

When an individual student comes to you due to a personal, individual crisis, the same basic rules apply. You should try to keep the student calm and use the active listening skills you have learned. You will want to try to take the student away from the rest of the group, so the crisis does not spread among the other students. Remind the student immediately of the rules and exceptions to confidentiality. You want the student to feel open enough to share the situation with you, but you also want the student to be aware that you may need to talk to their parents or other officials if they are in danger of being hurt or of hurting others.

It is not possible to prepare for every situation that may occur at a school or within a community. However, you should become familiar with basic procedures and steps. Understand and be prepared to take the above steps. Also, become familiar with your school's crisis plan. If your school does not have one, encourage your administration to work on developing one. You never know when you will need it.

Part 5: Case Examples

In this section you will analyze a few scenarios of what might happen in an advisory session. These are fictitious examples that should help you to understand how the topics presented in this handbook may play out in real situations.

The first case, “Billy’s Science Grade,” is presented twice to demonstrate what changes could be made to improve the initial advisory session. The second two cases are left up to you, as an advisor, to critique and discuss what was positive and what could be improved.

Billy's Science Grade

Billy started at Westside Middle School at the beginning of second semester. He has now been in school for 2 months, but he has not made many friends and still gets lost in the hallways. He does not speak to many people throughout the day. However, he is typically a strong student and earns mostly Bs.

One day he enters his advisory classroom very upset because he had just earned a poor grade on his science exam. He wants to improve his grades but does not know what resources are available to him. He looks around the advisory room and notices that his classmates are sitting in rows in their desks, a few are working on their homework, a few are eating breakfast, and one is asleep. Because his classmates are preoccupied, he decides that it is a good opportunity to speak with his advisor, Ms. Smith, about this issue. He tells her about his poor science grade, but does not have a chance to tell her how alone he is feeling at school. Ms. Smith is excited to help him and sees this as a great learning opportunity for all her advisees. She announces to the class that Billy has received a poor grade and asks other students to provide him with advice. The other students laugh, make demeaning comments, and call Billy names. Mrs. Smith suggests that he talk with his science teacher.

Billy leaves advisory feeling worse than before. Not only did he not know many people, but now his classmates had laughed at him. He does not speak with his science teacher and he never asks his advisor for help again.

- What skills did this advisor and advisees seem to lack?
- How should Ms. Smith's advisory be structured differently?
- What could have been done differently to help Billy succeed at school?
- Were there any positive aspects of this advisory session?

Billy's Science Grade: Take 2

Billy started at Westside Middle School at the beginning of second semester. Although he has only been in school for 2 months, he has made several friends. He is very shy and does not speak much throughout the day. However, he is typically a strong student and earns mostly Bs.

One day he enters his advisory classroom very upset because he had just earned a poor grade on his science exam. He wants to improve his grades. He looks around the advisory room, sees his “buddy”, and quickly sits in the desk next to him. On the first day he came to school Billy’s advisor, Ms. Smith, noticed that Billy was shy, so she assigned him a “buddy” in advisory. This “buddy” showed him around the school, introduced him to his friends, sat with him during advisory, and became Billy’s close friend. Billy tells his friend about the science grade before advisory begins.

When Ms. Smith joins the group in the circle the group looks at her to start off the session. She starts with the same phrase that she uses everyday, “Let’s begin with a check-in. How is everyone doing today?” Billy’s “buddy” looks at Billy encouragingly. Billy then shares his experience. Other students tell Billy about when they had done poorly and what they had done to improve. The students discuss strategies that had worked and what hadn’t worked.

Billy leaves feeling better than before. His advisory teacher volunteers to speak with the science teacher and his “buddy” agrees to help him with his science homework.

- What skills did this advisor and advisees seem to have?
- How was the advisory structured to encourage this positive conversation?
- What was done right by the advisor to help Billy succeed at school?
- Were there any negative aspects of this advisory session?

Weekend Plans

Mr. Jones' advisory has been together for 4 years. The seniors in his group have grown very close over the years. Many of them hang out together on the weekends and socialize in the hallways. They love advisory because they get to be together and talk about their lives. They love their advisor because he is "cool" and treats them like equals.

One Monday all the students walk in the room excitedly talking about a party that took place on Saturday night. They were all at the party and had a great time. Mr. Jones asks them about the party and what it was like. The students state that there was a lot of alcohol there, but that they were not drinking. They tell Mr. Jones all about the night. He then tells the students about the parties he went to in college. He tells them how much he and his friends drank in college. He then adds that they need to be careful and not drink and drive. The students assure him that everyone at the party was safe, just having a good time.

- What went well in this advisory session?
- What could have been done or said differently in this advisory session?

Kim's Crisis

Last night Kim's brother was in a car accident. He was released from the hospital with minor injuries. However, the incident was consuming Kim's thoughts. By the time she enters her 9th grade advisory group after first period, she has begun to have a break down about the incident. She walks into advisory crying. She throws her backpack on the floor and flings herself into the chair.

Ms. Sun, the advisor, has formed a very close relationship with Kim over the course of the year. She notices that Kim was not herself. Ms. Sun asks Kim what is wrong. Through her tears Kim tells Ms. Sun the story of her brother's accident. Ms. Sun comforts her as the other advisees enter the room. Soon the other girls in the group ask Kim what happened. As she tells them the story, they all begin to cry as well. As the advisory session ends, several girls are still crying. Ms. Sun does the best she can to comfort them, but then tells the girls that they have to go to second period. Once the students are out of the room, Ms. Sun speaks to Kim's school counselor to inform him of the incident. He later calls her out of class to talk with her.

- What went well in this advisory session?
- What could have been done or said differently in this advisory session?

Part 6: Resources

Resources for Advisory

Resources with Activities for Advisories:

- *Activities that Teach* by Tom Jackson
- *Team-Building Activities for Every Group* by Alanna Jones
- *104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, Coping Skills* by Alanna Jones
- *Activities for Advisories & After School Programs* by Youth Communications
- *201 Ice Breakers* by Edie West
- *Treasure Chest: A Teacher Advisory Source Book* by Cheryl Hoversten, Nancy Doda, and John Lounsbury

Resources on Facilitating Advisories:

- *Conducting Group Discussions with Kids: A Leader's Guide for Making Activities Meaningful* by Tom Jackson
- *Student Advisories in Grades 5 – 12: A Facilitator's Guide* by Susan Maclaury
- *Kid-to-Kid: A Facilitator's Guide to Empowering Students through Open Discussion* by Marcia Rogat
- *How to Create Positive Relationships with Students: A Handbook of Group Activities and Teaching Strategies* by Michelle Karns

Resources on Structuring Advisory Programs:

- *Mission-Based Advisory: A Professional Development Manual* by Roger Dillow
- *Developing an Effective Advisor/Advisee Program* by Phyllis Dale
- *How to Design an Advisory System for a Secondary School* by Mark Goldberg
- *The Advising Guide: Design and Implementing Effective Advisory Programs in Secondary Schools* by Rachel Poliner and Carol Lieber
- *Advisory: Definitions, Descriptions, Decisions, Directions* by John Galassi, Suzanne Gulledge, and Nancy Cox
- *Professional Development Kit: Launching a Successful Advisory Program* by John Niska and Sue Thompson
- *Taking the Lead in Implementing and Improving Advisory* by Robert Spear

Los Angeles Resources for Students

About this section:

This section provides contact phone numbers and websites for students. Some of the resources deal with very serious situations. Make sure to know the policies and procedures of your school in dealing with student issues. Know who you should contact for support and direction including the school counselor, school psychologist, and/or principal. You can provide these resources to students after you have taken the appropriate steps within your school. You should also ask for resources from your school and from local agencies.

Alcohol and Drugs

Alateen

- Programs for teen relatives and friends of alcoholics
- Phone: (213) 387-3158 or 1-800-425-2666 Spanish: (562) 948-2190
- Website: www.al-anon.alateen.org

Alcoholics Anonymous

- Phone: (323) 936-4343 Spanish (323) 735-2089
- Website: www.lacoaa.org

American Lung Association

- Provides information on quitting smoking.
- Phone: 1-800-586-4872
- Website: www.californialung.org/

Drug Information Help or National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

- Information and referrals for drugs and alcohol treatment.
- Phone: 1-800-729-6686 Spanish 1-877-767-8432
- Website: <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov>

Nar-Anon/World Service Office

- Meeting for family and friends of drug users.
- Phone: (310) 534-8188 or 1-800-477-6291
- Website: <http://nar-anon.org/>

Narcotics Anonymous Meeting Information Line

- Helpline and local meeting referrals.
- Phone: (818) 773-999 or 1-800-863-2962 Spanish: 1-888-622-4672
- Website: www.todayna.org or www.na.org

Child Abuse

Child Protection Hotline of Los Angeles County

- Report abuse and referrals for counseling and services.
- Phone: 1-800-540-4000

House of Ruth Child Abuse Treatment Program

- Counseling and services for teens who have experienced abuse or neglect.
- Phone: (909) 623-4364

Dating and Sexual Abuse and Violence

Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (LACAAW)/Peace Over Violence

- Information and counseling for teens on youth violence and sexual assaults.
- Phone: 24 hour hotline: (626) 793-3385 or (310) 392-8381 or (213) 626-3393
- Website: <http://www.peaceoverviolence.org/>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

- Toll-free hotline with crisis counseling and referrals to shelters and other local programs.
- Phone: 1-800-799-SAFE(7233) TTY Line: 1-800-787-3224
- Website: www.ndvh.org

Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN)

- Toll-free crisis counseling, information, and referrals for survivors of rape, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.
- Phone: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- Website: www.rainn.org

Rape Treatment Center at Santa Monica UCLA Medical Center

- Emergency care, information, and counseling for teens on sexual abuse, sexual assault, and rape.
- Phone: (310) 319-4503
- Website: www.911rape.org

Eating Disorders

Monte Nido Treatment Center

- Residential treatment to help women with anorexia, bulimia, and exercise addition.
- Phone: (310) 457-9958

National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA)

- Connect people with resources, information, and referrals.
- Phone: 1-800-931-2237 or (206) 382-3587
- Website: www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

Overeaters Anonymous

- Information and referrals for all types of eating disorders.
- Phone: (323) 653-7652 or Meeting Hotline (323) 653-7499
- Website: www.oalaig.org

Gang Prevention

Clean Slate

- Gang violence recovery.
- Phone: (562) 945-9111
- Website: www.cleanslatela.org

Teens on Target (Youth ALIVE!)

- Peer educators and advocates help prevent violence.
- Phone: (323) 225-0401
- Website: www.youthalive.org

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Services

Gay and Lesbian National Hotline

- Information and referrals.
- Phone: (323) 843-4564 Hotline: 1-888-843-4564 Talkline: 1-800-246-7743
- Website: www.glnh.org

Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center

- Services for youth including anti-violence, counseling, and medical testing.
- Phone: (323) 993-7400
- Website: www.LAGayCenter.org

Trevor Line

- Crisis line and referrals.
- Phone: 1-866-488-7386
- Website: www.thetrevorhelpline.org

Grief Support

I Count Too

- Support for students with loved ones with life threatening illnesses.
- Phone: (626) 397-3600

Our House

- Bereavement counseling for students and adults.
- Phone: (310) 475-0299
- Website: www.ourhouse-grief.org

Teen Impact

- Support for students with cancer.
- Phone: (323) 669-4660
- Website: www.teenimpactprogram.com

Legal Assistance

Alliance for Children's Rights

- Free legal services for students.
- Phone: (213) 368-6010
- Website: www.kids-alliance.org

Bilingual Immigration and Naturalization Services

- Information regarding immigration.
- Phone: (714) 808-8000

Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

- Free legal services.
- Phone: 1-800-399-4529 or (323) 801-7991 TDD Phone: (310) 393-7734
- Website: www.lafla.org

Suicide and Self-Injury

California Youth Crisis Line

- Crisis phone counseling, information, and referrals.
- Phone: 1-800-843-5200
- Website: www.youthcrisisline.org

Safe Alternatives

- Support for students who engage in self-harm behaviors
- Phone: 1-800-366-8288 or (630) 305-5813
- Website: www.selfinjury.com

Suicide Prevention Hotline

- Hotline, information, and referrals.
- Phone: 1-877-727-4747
- Website: www.suicidepreventioncenter.org

Teen Line

- Most of the resources listed above were made available through Teen Line's Youth Yellow Pages. Teen Line is a free hotline that operates from 6pm-10pm and can offer other referrals and support.
- Phone: 1-800-852-8336
 - Los Angeles Phone: (310) 855-4673
 - Valley Phone: (818) 432-2266
 - Riverside Phone: (951) 826-4673
- Website: www.teenlineonline.org