

What Your School Counsellor Can & Cannot Do

Your child's school counsellor can be a fountain of information and support for you as you begin to learn more about your child's mental health. While these individuals can provide many resources, there is sometimes confusion about what a school counselor can and cannot do for your child.

Let's clear some of that confusion up for you.

School counsellors CAN:

- Complete and score assessments (SNAP- for ADHD/ODD symptoms, SCARED- for anxiety, Kutcher Adolescent Depression scale or PH-Q 9 Adolescent Depression Questionnaire, some use the Connors Scale (for ADHD and commonly related diagnosis);
- Can accompany parents to Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) to help support and speak on behalf of the school what we are noticing;
- Can write a letter outlining school concerns for CYMH and advocate for the child at school meetings;
- Can provide other community counselling resources/suggestions for support;
- Can collaborate with community agencies and share information for treatment planning- parent needs to sign a release of information form first);
- Can provide parents with an idea of what skills they are working on with your child while maintaining confidentiality;
- Can write an individual education plan for the child's file outlining ways to best support them at school (first the child must be brought up to school based team by their teacher and agreed on by the team that a mild mental health designation called "R designation in Surrey" or "H Intensive behaviour support/mental health - this may differ province to province and even school district to school district");
- Can hold a integrated case management meeting including other community professionals involved in supporting the child if they have a "R" or "H" designation;

School counsellors CANNOT

- Diagnose mental health disorders;
- Provide traditional 1 hour therapy sessions in a school setting.