



Northwest Missouri School Counselors Association

Counselors Helping Counselors

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December 2014



Presidential Perspective

Glenda Fine
NWMSCA President

Breaking Barriers – Instilling Hope

As we began the start of this school year, I wrote my first Presidential Perspective. I chose to focus on the “Hope” portion of this year’s school counselor theme, knowing I would focus on some of the “barriers” a little later. Well, that time is now. As I look at the big picture, I see three areas I would like to address. First, school counselors need to break down barriers for our students. Second, school counselors need to look at some common misconceptions about our roles, which create a barrier that hinders the delivery of the Missouri Model Guidance. And third, we need to continue to provide hope for those with whom we come in contact.

When MSCA President Nancy Richie shared with the program committee her idea of this year’s theme, her guiding desire was to help alleviate some of the stigma associated with our special population students. Whether special education or gifted;

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NWMSCA Fall Meeting Recap

by Becky Houtchens, Secretary

On October 3, 2014, the annual NWMSCA fall meeting was held at Missouri Western State University. President Glenda Fine welcomed members to the meeting, giving a special welcome to new counselors, counselors new to the Northwest Region, and to retired counselors.

Master Sergeant Brent Young from the Missouri Army National Guard introduced each recruiter and gave an update on the National Guard. NWMSCA gave special thanks to the Missouri National Guard and Missouri Western State University for hosting and providing breakfast and lunch for the fall meeting.

Shelly Vertin was presented a plaque in appreciation of her service as 2013-14 NWMSCA President. Members were encouraged to nominate others for Counselor Advocate of the Year. That application is available on the NWMSCA website.



K'Lea Steeby and Karrie Engel present Shelly Vertin with the Past President Recognition Award.

Among agenda items for the business meeting were the following: members were invited to sign up to serve on NWMSCA Critical Response teams, all Missouri school counselors can sign up on the MSCA website to receive the Missouri Guidance Digest directly to their email address, and it was shared that an MSCA 504 task force for counselors is being created. Donations were accepted for Special Olympics, this year’s human rights cause.

Discussion was held about NWMSCA dues. The Governing Board has discussed raising dues for the past several years to provide for high quality professional development at the fall and spring region meetings, to support new scholarship programs that have been

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Perspective . . .

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regardless of race, religion, or LGBTQ status; and in spite of where an individual falls on the spectrum or socio-economic level – all students deserve a chance to succeed. Each student is worthy of being treated as an individual with talents, dreams, and a future. In light of recent events in the media, there is no denying the need for more understanding and breaking of barriers for our students who will soon be our businessmen and women and leaders. From the unrest in the Ferguson area to the slaying of the young Islamic student in the Kansas City area – our students and families need us so much.

As school counselors breaking these barriers, we have to help instill a sense of empathy and compassion for others – both in the classroom and our communities. And while doing this, we need to be ever mindful of the seemingly smaller barriers (although they are really not so small) of teasing, belittling, and the many other ways of eroding the confidence our children need. It's not okay to disregard a student "from that family" or because "he's just trouble" or never "good enough." We need to advocate for each of our students at every education level. We need to provide them with hope and a vision for their future.

While advocating for our students, we need to also be aware of barriers encircling us in our profession. One of the largest barriers I see for professional school counselors is the misconception others have regarding our role. Although quite flattering to think we can accomplish so much, it's really not possible, or ethical, for us to take on many of the tasks set before us. While most other educators realize that we are not licensed to diagnose, many parents will still ask what we think might be going on with their child. In more and more districts, school counselors are being given the task of writing and managing 504's. And we are often seen as the back-up disciplinarian when the principal must be out of the building. To help break our own professional misconception barriers, we must be willing to educate others and advocate for our true roles and responsibilities. Failure to do so takes time away from the delivery of the Missouri Model Guidance.

Hope is what is needed in these situations. We want to give our students hope on assignments, with friendships, and for college and career opportunities. We are individual cheerleaders for each child and family with whom we work – full of encouragement and hope. We give hope to the families looking for a diagnosis to explain a child's behavior or lack of success. We fill our teammates – teachers, administrators, and support staff – with hope as they begin to see positive changes in students. And, *hopefully*, we begin to experience some hope ourselves. Hope that the deadlines will be met; hope that the fax goes through; hope that the children's division will take our report; hope that the bully prevention materials make a difference; hope that the steps learned in the safe touch lesson are never needed; hope that we can hold on for just a few more days....

As we draw closer to winter break, Christmas break as it was called in my day, my wish for you is that you will begin to feel the hope you've so freely given others coming back to you. Enjoy time with your home family rather than your school family. Relax. Take a break. Recharge yourself – you deserve it. My sincere hope for you is that 2015 will be a year of blessings for you – just as you bring blessings (and hope) to those you encounter.



Helping **O**ther **P**eople **E**xcel

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SAVE THE DATE! February 5, 2015

(Back up date due to inclement weather will be on Feb. 12)

School Counselor/Administrative Breakfast

This year the theme is all about humor! Bring your administrator and be ready to loosen up, laugh a lot and listen to Andrea Caspari! Andrea is an English teacher at Winnetonka High School in Kansas City, Missouri, and was recently named 'Funniest Female Comedian in Kansas City'. She will fuse the importance of education with the need of humor in our profession!

More details to come...

Northwest Missouri School Counselor Association Scholarship

by DeeAnna Kelley and Lorraine Bowers, Scholarship Co-Chairs

Which counselor-in-training will be our 2015 winner? Perhaps you have someone in mind right now! **Don't wait!**

The applicant has an opportunity to be awarded a \$300 scholarship just by filling out a form! All that needs to be done is go to the NWMSCA website at www.NWMSCA.org, click the "Application/Forms" link, and proceed to the NWMSCA Scholarship. From there, just key in your application information.

It is that simple, so get started on helping a student taking graduate classes toward a school guidance and counseling degree get some extra money! All applications must be postmarked or submitted on or before **February 1, 2015**

Additional information can be obtained from Lorraine Bowers at Lorraine.bowers@sjsd.k12.mo.us or DeeAnna Kelley at dee.anna.kelley@sjsd.k12.mo.us

Counselor Advocate of the Year Nominations Due Soon!

by Karrie Engel and K'Lea Steeby, Professional Recognition Co-chairs

Karrie Engel and K'Lea Steeby are now accepting Counselor Advocate of the Year nominations. The form is on the Northwest Missouri School Counselor Association website www.nwm sca.org and is due **January 15**. Applications will be accepted through fax, mail, or email.

If you have questions, please contact Karrie Engel at karrie.engel@sjsd.k12.mo.us or K'Lea Steeby at ksteeby@savannah3.com.

Fall Meeting

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added over the past few years, and to support general operating expenses. Considerations are being made to raise annual dues to \$20 (from the current \$15). The general membership is asked to provide input to Governing Board members, with a possible vote to raise dues to be held at the spring meeting.

After the business meeting, members moved across the hall to hear our speaker, Daryl Johnson, present the program, titled "Wisconsin Johnson." Johnson was 2007 Missouri State teacher of the year and 2013 National Teacher Hall of Fame inductee. Following the luncheon, new counselors and their mentors took part in training.

The NWMSCA Spring meeting will be held March 20, 2015 at EmPower U.



Keynote Speaker, Darryl "Wisconsin Johnson" presented his engaging and fun presentation at the Fall Meeting.

Rude vs Mean vs Bullying: Defining the Differences

shared by Jenni Busby from <http://huff.to/10KVsoW>

Signe Whitson is a licensed therapist, national educator on bullying, and author of three books including Friendship & Other Weapons: Group Activities to Help Young Girls Cope with Bullying. For more information or workshop inquiries, please visit www.signewhitson.com

A few weeks ago, I had the terrific fortune of getting to present some of the bullying prevention work that I do to a group of children at a local bookstore. As if interacting with smiling, exuberant young people was not gift enough, a reporter also attended the event and wrote a lovely article about my book and the work I do with kids, parents, educators, and youth care professionals. All in all, it was dream publicity and since then, has sparked many conversations with people in my town who saw my photo in the newspaper and immediately related to the examples of bullying that were discussed.

I have been brought to tears more than once since the article ran, while listening to parents share their feelings of outrage and helplessness over their kids' experiences with bullying in school. One gifted but socially awkward middle school student blew me away with his articulate, poised, yet searingly painful accounts of relentless physical and verbal bullying on his school bus. An elementary school-aged girl described how she had to learn to shed her Australian accent within a month of entering U.S. schools because of how she was shunned by her classmates. The commonness of it all routinely astounds me with every new account; the pervasive cruelty makes my jaw drop every time.

It is important for me to begin this article by establishing that without doubt, many of the stories of bullying that are shared with me are horrifying and some are unspeakably cruel. But now, I also want to be honest and share that some of the stories are... well... really not so bad.

Take this story recently shared with me by an acquaintance who read about my professional work: "Signe, I saw your picture in the paper last week. Congratulations! I didn't know you worked with bullied students. It's so important that you do – things have gotten so bad! Last week, my daughter was bullied really badly after school! She was getting off of her bus when this kid from our neighborhood threw a fistful of leaves right in her face! When she got home, she still had leaves in the hood of her coat. It's just awful! I don't know what to do about these bullies."

"Was she very upset when she got home?" I empathized.

"No. She just brushed the leaves off and told me they were having fun together," she said.

"Oh," I answered knowingly, aware that oftentimes kids try to downplay victimization by bullies from their parents, due to the embarrassment and shame they feel. "Did you get the sense she was covering for the boy?"

"No, no. She really seemed to think it was fun. She said that she threw leaves back at him, which I told her NEVER to do again! The nerve of those kids!"

"Those 'kids,' I clarified." Was it just the one boy throwing leaves or were there a bunch of kids all ganging up on her?"

"No, it was just this one boy that lives about a block from us," she assured me.

"Is he usually mean to her? Has he bothered her after school before?" I asked, eager at this point to figure out what the bullying issue was.

"No. I don't think so at least. That was the first time she ever said anything about him. It was definitely the first time that I noticed the leaves all over her coat. But it better be the last time! I won't stand for her being bullied by that kid. Next time, I am going to make sure the Principal knows what is going on after school lets out!"

While I always want to be careful not to minimize anyone's experience (it's the social worker in me!) and a part of me suspects that the sharing of this particular story may have been simply this parent's

spontaneous way of making conversation with me in a store aisle, I hear these “alarming” (read: benign) stories often enough to conclude that there is a real need to draw a distinction between behavior that is rude, behavior that is mean and behavior that is characteristic of bullying. I first heard bestselling children’s author, Trudy Ludwig, talk about these distinguishing terms and, finding them so helpful, have gone on to use them as follows:

Rude = Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.

A particular relative of mine (whose name it would be rude of me to mention) often looks my curly red hair up and down before inquiring in a sweet tone, “Have you ever thought about coloring your hair?” or “I think you look so much more sophisticated when you straighten your hair, Signe.” This doting family member thinks she is helping me. The rest of the people in the room cringe at her boldness and I am left to wonder if being a brunette would suit me. Her comments can sting, but remembering that they come from a place of love – in her mind – helps me to remember what to do with the advice...

From kids, rudeness might look more like burping in someone’s face, jumping ahead in line, bragging about achieving the highest grade or even throwing a crushed up pile of leaves in someone’s face. On their own, any of these behaviors could appear as elements of bullying, but when looked at in context, incidents of rudeness are usually spontaneous, unplanned inconsideration, based on thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism, but not meant to actually hurt someone.

Mean = Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice).

The main distinction between “rude” and “mean” behavior has to do with intention; while rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or depreciate someone. Kids are mean to each other when they criticize clothing, appearance, intelligence, coolness or just about anything else they can find to denigrate. Meanness also sounds like words spoken in anger – impulsive cruelty that is often regretted in short order. Very often, mean behavior in kids is motivated by angry feelings and/or the misguided goal of propping themselves up in comparison to the person they are putting down. Commonly, meanness in kids sounds an awful lot like:

- “Are you seriously wearing that sweater again? Didn’t you just wear it, like, last week? Get a life.”
- “You are so fat/ugly/stupid/gay.”
- “I hate you!”

Make no mistake; mean behaviors can wound deeply and adults can make a huge difference in the lives of young people when they hold kids accountable for being mean. Yet, meanness is different from bullying in important ways that should be understood and differentiated when it comes to intervention.

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More from the Fall Meeting



The Missouri Army National Guard recruiters do a roll call of their school districts. The National Guard helps host the NWMSCA Fall Meeting.



President Glenda Fine recognizes the 2014-2015 NWMSCA Governing Board members.

SAVE THE DATE!

NWMSCA Spring Meeting – Friday, March 20, 2015

EmPowerU in St. Joseph, MO

Join us for our business meeting, guest speaker, recognition of Counselors of the Year, and great fellowship!

Rude vs Mean vs Bullying: Defining the Differences

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Bullying = Intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power.

Experts agree that bullying entails three key elements: intent to harm, a power imbalance, and repeated acts or threats of aggressive behavior. Kids who bully say or do something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse – even when targets of bullying show or express their hurt or tell the aggressors to stop. Bullying may be physical, verbal, relational, or carried out via technology:

- **Physical aggression** was once the gold standard of bullying– the “sticks and stones” that made adults in charge stand up and take notice. This kind of bullying includes hitting, punching, kicking, spitting, tripping, hair pulling, slamming a child into a locker, and a range of other behaviors that involve physical aggression.
- **Verbal aggression** is what our parents used to advise us to “just ignore.” We now know that despite the old adage, words and threats can, indeed, hurt and can even cause profound, lasting harm.
- **Relational aggression** is a form of bullying in which kids use their friendship – or the threat of taking their friendship away – to hurt someone. Social exclusion, shunning, hazing, and rumor spreading are all forms of this pervasive type of bullying that can be especially beguiling and crushing to kids.
- **Cyberbullying** is a specific form of bullying that involves technology. According to Hinduja and Patchin of the Cyberbullying Research Center, it is the “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.” Notably, the likelihood of repeated harm is especially high with cyberbullying because electronic messages can be accessed by multiple parties, resulting in repeated exposure and repeated harm.

So, why is it so important to make the distinction between rude, mean and bullying? Can't I just let parents share with me stories about their kids?

Here's the thing; in our culture of 24/7 news cycles and social media sound bites, we have a better opportunity than ever before to bring attention to important issues. In the last few years, Americans have collectively paid attention to the issue of bullying like never before; millions of school children have been given a voice, 49 states in the U.S. have passed anti-bullying legislation, and thousands of adults have been trained in important strategies to keep kids safe and dignified in schools and communities. These are significant achievements.

At the same time, however, I have already begun to see that gratuitous references to bullying are creating a bit of a “little boy who cried wolf” phenomena. In other words, if kids and parents improperly classify rudeness and mean behavior as bullying – whether to simply make conversation or to bring attention to their short-term discomfort – we all run the risk of becoming so sick and tired of hearing the word that this actual life-and-death issue among young people loses its urgency as quickly as it rose to prominence.

It is important to distinguish between rude, mean, and bullying so that teachers, school administrators, police, youth workers, parents, and kids all know what to pay attention to and when to intervene. As we have heard too often in the news, a child's future may depend on a non-jaded adult's ability to discern between rudeness at the bus stop and life-altering bullying.

Happy Holidays

Support for Multi-Level Counselors

by Becky Whitmer, Multi-level VP

Hello Multi-Level Counselors! I hope that your year has been going great so far. If it has been crazy or you need help, remember that there are others going through the same things as you are. At the MSCA conference this year, we had a great level sharing section. It is great to have open discussion with counselors from across the state that are dealing with the same issues.

This year we started our session by shouting out any topics we wanted to discuss as a group. We discussed the new ACT testing, responsibilities with IEP's, college/career days, survey tools, state testing, yearly calendars, administering the COMPASS test in your high school, the new counselor evaluation system, and many more items. What a relief it is to hear that other professionals feel overwhelmed at times and that it is okay that we don't have all of the answers.

Another great thing that came from the level sharing meeting was our informal list-serve. The state vice-president emailed all of us a group about different topics of concern. Since the state meeting, we have been asking questions to the group and sharing suggestions. If you would like to receive these emails, please send me an email and I will forward you the information. I would love to start our own multi-level group if you all would find that helpful. Please email me at bewhitmer133@gmail.com if you would like more information.

Administering the COMPASS in your High School

Although administering another test may seem daunting to most of us, some schools may want to take advantage of this opportunity. With the PLAN and EXPLORE no longer being available, many schools have started to look to the COMPASS. A high school cannot apply directly to ACT to become a test site. You can however become a designated test site for a vocational school or community college. I was able to contact Lori Holder at North Central Missouri College and got the paperwork the same day. Other counselors across the state have worked with Moberly Area Community College and Ozark Technical College.

I am new to this process, but please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

2014 MSCA Fall Conference – Breaking Barriers, Building Connections

by Corrine Allee, Newsletter Editor

The annual MSCA Fall Conference was another huge success. The opening keynote speaker, Dave Pelzer (author of *A Child Called It*), delivered a moving presentation on overcoming all obstacles. It set the tone for the rest of the Conference. The closing keynote speaker, Jedd Hafer, provided a fun and light-hearted approach to breaking barriers, with some Love and Logic lessons thrown in. A change in the programming format provided counselors with the opportunity to attend one longer break-out session on Sunday and a break-out session schedule that was more spread out on Monday. There were many opportunities for counselors to connect with each other, learn new ideas, recharge, and HAVE FUN! Throughout the Conference, counselors can visit the exhibit hall, enjoy the hospitality rooms, and contribute to Special Olympics through the Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, or Fun Run/Walk, Zumba, and Yoga.

This is professional development at its finest for the Professional School Counselor. If you are able, I really encourage you to attend the 2015 MSCA Fall Conference. I guarantee that you will be glad you did!

Are You a Google User? Technology and the School Counselor

by Lani Clayton, Technology Chair

With the rise in technological emphasis, such as in state testing, there is a push to incorporate as much technology as possible into each classroom setting. As professional school counselors, we can jump on board as well to enhance our lessons. Technology such as Chromebooks or similar tools is a great way to increase teamwork, critical thinking, and creativity all while making the curriculum interesting for students. Here is a variety of ways Chromebooks can be used in school guidance:

1. Through the Google Drive features of Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students can work collaboratively on the same presentation or writing assignment and see each other's edits. Instead of working on separate computers and stopping to ask a partner or group member what information they located, each student can see the new material in real time.
2. The Google+ feature is a great way to live stream guest speakers, pen pals from another school, or perhaps college representatives.
3. Google Sites is a tool teachers can use to create web pages for their classrooms and also has features for students to create ePortfolios which can be updated throughout the year and carry forward to each grade level.
4. Google Apps provide a variety of tools to use in the delivery of curriculum and collection of data. Through Google Moderator students can respond to specific questions as well as read and reflect upon other student responses.
5. Chrome Web Apps for Education is a toolbox of interactive mediums for teachers. Through Glogster, students can create online posters to represent topics being discussed such as character education traits or career goals. Through WeVideo, students can shoot, edit, and create videos.
6. Google Forms and other tools allow teachers to create and grade assessments. The process is an easy and interactive means to survey students.

Chromebook Resources:

Google Apps for Education Online Training Center

<http://edutraining.googleapps.com/Training-Home>

Google for Education +

<https://plus.sandbox.google.com/u/0/+GoogleforEducation/posts>

Chromebooks EDU + Community

<http://goo.gl/Glfgl>

Education on Air

<https://sites.google.com/site/eduonair/>

Recorded Webinars

<http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/education/resources/recorded-webinars.htm>

What Can the Critical Incident Response Teams Do For You?

by LeAnna Wilcox and Becky Arway,
Critical Incident Co-Chairs

NWMSCA counselors, did you know that if an emergency occurred within your school, district, or community and if you were in need of extra help that there is a Critical Incident Response Team within your area that can provide extra support to your staff, parents, students, and community members?

The Critical Incident Response Teams can assist professional school counselors in the following ways:

- Assisting professional school counselors in becoming prepared to handle crisis situations in the school and community.
- Provide information, offer training opportunities, and then share appropriate resources upon requests.

Northwest Missouri school counselors who have volunteered to serve on Critical Incident Response teams serve the following counties:

Team A: serving **Atchison, Nodway, and Worth**

Team B: serving **Andrew, Holt, DeKalb, and Gentry**

Team C: serving **Buchanan, Clinton, Platte, and Clay**

Team D: serving **Harrison, Mercer, and Grundy**

Team E: serving **Davies, Livingston, Ray, and Caldwell**

A complete list of CIR members is located on the NWMSCA website. Please contact Team Leaders Rebecca Arway at (660) 354-2524 or LeAnna Wilcox at (816) 528-7742 if we can help in any way. Happy Holidays!!!