Abstracts

"The voices we forgot": School counselors dealing with adolescent girls who have experienced sexual abuse

Inbar Levkovich and Sana Kamel Jabbour

This study examines the experiences of school counselors working with adolescent girls who have been sexually abused in Arab society. The study is based on a phenomenological qualitative method. For the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen high school counselors from the Arab society in the north of Israel, who in the past two years worked with adolescents aged 14-18, who experienced sexual abuse. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed.

The findings of the study indicate that school counselors have responded to learning about sexual abuse with feelings of shock, pain, and helplessness. Alongside the support received from the counseling psychological service, they experienced a demand from the school administrators to keep the incident quiet. The counselors described significant difficulties in dealing with the parents of the sexually abused adolescents who sought to prevent reporting the incident to the authorities for the sake of the family's honor and blamed the adolescent for the abuse. Counselors said that that their work with the victims of sexual abuse resulted in concerns and anxiety about possible abuse of their own children. The findings of the study indicate that providing knowledge, professional training and support to school counselors should focus on ways to deal with victims of sexual abuse and unique cultural aspects.

Keywords: school counselors; sexual abuse; adolescent girls; Arab society; school counseling in the Arab society.

Characteristics of the Help-Seeking Process among LGBT Adolescents and Young Adults during the Process of Coming Out: A Retrospective View

Tzachi Cohen and Moshe Tatar

The current pilot study focused on the sources of help and support that LGBT adolescents and young adults turn to during their process of coming out, based on retrospective reports. As part of the crystallization of their sexual identity, LGBT adolescents and young adults face many difficulties. They notice the difference between themselves and their immediate environment, which is often heterosexual, and thus experience shame and loneliness. In their process of coming out, which is often characterized by confusing and conflicting elements, they are likely to seek help and support. In this study, we collected almost 180 reports of LGBT youngsters describing their help-seeking behaviors in their process of coming out retrospectively, and analyzed them in light of models and studies on adolescents' help-seeking. Using an internet self-report questionnaire, participants described the first source of help they chose to turn to and the most significant one, the considerations that led them to choose those sources; and the types of help they received. We also examined the relationship between the reports and some demographic variables (gender and age of the participant at the time of turning to seeking help). The findings suggest that friends are the preferred source of help for LGBT. Besides friends, LGBT turn to their family and to formal sources for help. About one-third of participants turned to a source, which describes himself/herself as LGBT, as part of their first approach to help-seeking. The most common consideration used to select the source of help is closeness or an expectation of understanding, and the most expected and received type of help is emotional support. Based on content analysis, we presented characteristics for the most significant help they received. In the discussion we focused on three main issues: the importance of the types of sources of help in the process of coming out; the sexual identity of the source of help and how it influenced the help-seeking; and the unique place of emotional help as a main component in the process of coming out. We proposed some practical implications regarding the sources of help-seeking in the process of coming out and suggest further research to broaden the discussion on this matter.

Students' willingness to seek help from school Rabbis for dealing with school violence

Shulamit Hershkowitz and Yaacov B. Yablon

The current study examined the contribution of school rabbis as providing counseling and support for the students, alongside the school counselors and the school staff, while focusing on students seeking help when coping with school violence. Using a mixed methods research design the sample comprised of 512 students in 7th-12th grade from religious high schools, religious girls high schools, and yeshivas throughout the country, and school rabbis from these institutions. Students answered questionnaires which examined their willingness to seek help from different staff members in school, including the school rabbi, following a case of violence. In addition, interviews were held with seven students and six rabbis. Analysis of the results indicated that the school rabbi serves as a significant address for children seeking help and assistance. The main factors that were found to explain the willingness to seek help from the rabbi were the rabbi's education and training, the perceived capability of the rabbi to assist, the rabbi's availability, and a positive relationship with the rabbi. The role of rabbis in providing support and counseling as well as their involvement in the students' support system and the consequences are discussed.

Keywords: School violence; School rabbis; Help seeking; Pastoral care; Spiritual support

Evaluating the activities of the school council: A comparison between the perceptions of active and inactive students

Ester Halfon and Shlomo Romi

The school council is involved in, and meaningful to, the school in a variety of ways. It can be an important educational force. The objective of this study was to examine four areas for differences between the ways students active in the student council perceive its activities, compared to those who are inactive: 1. The student council's contribution to instilling democratic values and student rights; 2. The extent in which membership in the student council contributes to the student's achievements; 3. The extent in which membership in the student council promotes personal skills; 4. The extent of the relevance of student councils.

This study is part of a comprehensive study carried out on the topic of student councils. 600 high school students took part in this study, some who were active members in their student council, whereas others were not. This study used questionnaires to evaluate the above mentioned four areas of the student council's activities. The findings suggest that students active in student councils evaluate its activities as a medium to high contribution to most of the indices studied, and their evaluation was considerably higher compared to those students who were not active. Furthermore, the study found a small number of variables where there were no differences between the two groups. These findings may suggest other educational insights. The insights that emerged from the study are relevant to the school's student counselor's work as the person in charge of developing the best possible school climate, and as the one in charge of promoting the student's needs and personal skills.

Keywords: School councils; social skills; leadership skills.

The Relationship between Gifted Children's Parents and the Educational Staff in "Enrichment Centers" for Gifted Children in the Israeli Educational System

Zipora Sharon Babchik and Yael Kimhi

Parents' relations with the educational system is of interest to educators, researchers and parents. Gifted students are a unique group within the educational system, and there is little research concerning the collaboration between their parents and the schools. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between these parents and the educational staff in the "enrichment centers".

Four mothers, four teachers and two principals working in these centers participated in this study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then underwent content analysis. Two major themes emerged:

1. The hopes and expectations regarding the collaboration with the parents from three different perspectives – parents, teachers and principals: the parents are involved in the enrichment centers' activities, but not in the core aspects of the educational process.

2. The collaboration is characterized by four levels – advice seeking; collaboration regarding general systemic issues; collaboration regarding initiatives; and the construction of mutual relations. While the parents perceive the educational staff as professional, which advances educational processes, there is not yet any strategic partnerships with the parents in which joint processes of decision-making, and the recognition of each party's identity and division of responsibilities exist.

Parenthood Experiences of Immigrant Mothers from the Commonwealth of Independent States

Julia Shein and Julia Mirsky

This paper deals with the parenthood experience of mothers who immigrated to Israel from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The purpose of this paper is to understand mothers' point of view regarding the complex processes of cultural transition that they are going through and understand their perception regarding raising children in a bi-cultural setting. 30 mothers were interviewed with in depth interviews. A half of them – first generation immigrants from CIS – mothers whose family at the time of immigration consisted of at least on child, less than 15 years of age. The second half of interviewees – "generation and a half" immigrants, consisted of mothers who had immigrated as children with their parents, grown up in Israel, where they also got married and became mothers.

The findings revealed five central themes. They indicate that in the process of the transition from country to another, the changes that occur in the social-cultural field affect different parenting aspects. The combination of cultures creates a situation where on one hand, mothers try to keep their culture of origin while on the other hand, they are also affected by the new environment.

No longer in private: The perceptions of teachers who were cyberbullied by parents on WhatsApp

Michal Dolev-Cohen, Moran Yona choen and Orel Olrich

Cyberbullying of teachers has become more prevalent in recent years. Most research in this field focuses on students who bully other students or teachers, while very few studies have examined cases of teachers who are bullied by parents online. The objective of the current study is to examine teachers' experiences of being cyberbullied by parents via WhatsApp. To this end, we conducted a qualitative research study that entailed twelve in-depth semi-structured interviews with elementary school teachers in the northern region. The research findings indicate that the participants consider WhatsApp to be a convenient tool for communicating with parents, but also see it as a platform that is liable to harm parent-teacher relations. In addition, the participants considered being cyberbullied on WhatsApp to be insulting, threatening and frustrating. Moreover, most of the participants expressed a need for support from the school administration, though they did not receive it. These findings shed light on cyberbullying of teachers as seen by the victims. Based on these findings, the paper will discuss the implications for teachers and counselors.

Keywords: WhatsApp; cyberbullying; parent-teacher relations; education.

The educational team's perception of the 2014-2016 Accommodation Policy and its application: Professional, emotional, and organizational aspects

Shua Englman

In 2014, the Israeli Ministry of Education established a new policy regarding students with learning disabilities, manifested in providing accommodations for them. The present research is a qualitative study of the perceptions of the school educational team of the policy and describing the main professional problems they encounter in applying it. The 20 participants came from five difference high schools, representing different sectors. The findings were surprising in that the perceptions were similar across sectional, educational, and professional-identity lines. The qualitative content analysis yielded three main themes: (1) Team's perception of the accommodations policy and its rationale; (2) Concurrence with the need for changing work guidelines alongside a sense of frustration with the policy's shortcomings, despite some sporadic success; (3) Partial understanding of the underlying educational rationale, expressed in emphasis on a accommodations in the way exams are taken, usually ignoring the priority and importance of accommodations in learning methods. The findings reveal that most participants maintained that the accommodations policy is not consistent with the value of equal opportunities regarding the full potential of learning abilities. The findings further indicated the main professional, bureaucratic, and emotional difficulties. Among educational counselors, teachers, and accommodations coordinators there were doubts regarding their professional ability, while the principals held more complex and positive attitudes. The article concludes with suggestions, based on the findings regarding the work of educational counselors and their unique position within the team. These suggestions emphasize training and professional support, and providing emotional and educational responses for other team members, teachers, and students and their families.

Keywords: accommodations; learning disabilities; school team; educational policy.

Self-evaluation of teaching: Development and application of a questionnaire for teachers

Stella Gidalevich and Zehavah Bigman

Optimal teaching is related to self-regulation of pedagogical processes and is felt to necessitate reflective thinking. However, many practicing teachers do not engage in active reflection, due to the intense demands on their time. Self-evaluation questionnaires allow learners and professionals to think about task performance and plan future changes. In this paper, we present findings from a two-part study on the development and utility of a questionnaire to promote self-evaluation of pedagogical processes among teachers. Statements were derived from reflective essays and focused on teaching parameters related to professional competence. Participants rate the degree to which they think about behaviors described in each item. Content, construct and convergent validity were established with 130 practicing teachers who completed the questionnaire and wrote comparison reflective essays. Following validation, four teachers completed the questionnaire once a week for four weeks and participated in semi-structured interviews at the end of the period and again, after three months. Content analysis showed contribution of the questionnaire to changes in teaching practices as well as to thoughts about professional identity. They found themselves thinking differently about their teaching as a result of routine use of the questionnaire. Results suggest benefits of routine use of the questionnaire for practicing teachers and guidance counsellors.

Keywords: self-evaluation of teaching practices; self-regulated learning; pedagogical knowledge.

Family-Work Relationship among Ultra-Orthodox Women Working in the Educational System in Israel

Sarah Rosenau and Itzhak Gilat

The present study examined perceptions of ultra-orthodox and secular women, working in the Israeli educational system, regarding the family-work interface. The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of the relationship between the two systems, which compete on the mental and physical resources and to learn about coping strategies with conflict between commitments. In a mixed design, the quantitative part was based on data gathered from 93 ultra-orthodox and 83 secular married women, who filled a questionnaire measuring commitment to family and work. The qualitative part comprised open descriptions of the meanings of two concepts that were the focus of the study. The quantitative findings revealed a higher commitment to the family in both groups, but the difference was significantly stronger among the orthodox participants, implying a lesser degree of conflict compared to the secular. The qualitative analysis revealed a more complex meaning of family-work interface among the orthodox teachers On the one hand, the supreme commitment to the family was well rooted in the beliefs and in the practice of the women, with the work perceived as instrumental to keeping the household. On the other hand, the participants described work as a source of satisfaction and self-fulfillment. The study illustrated how the teachers succeed to navigate their ways considering the emerging trends in the orthodox society of openness to encounter the occupational facet of the Israeli society.