The Application of Community Psychology Values and Guiding Concepts to School Consultation

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Our main purpose in this article is to introduce a value-based approach to planning in educational settings. Based on some of the central values of community psychology, namely, caring and compassion, health, self-determination and participation, human diversity, and distributive justice, we present a framework that may be used to guide school consultation work. Following an explanation of the rationale and need for a value-based framework, we describe, in a case study, how we implemented this approach in helping a secondary school to identify problem areas and to begin to develop interventions that would address their particular needs, strengths, and resources. We describe how we attempted to enact the values just mentioned during the preentry, entry, work, and separation phases of the consultative process. The unique contribution of this article lies in the articulation of community psychology values and their application in school settings. The challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned in implementing a value-based approach are explored.

Community psychologists and school consultants often talk about values, but rarely do they define them and show how they can be translated into action. Most studies reported in the literature place emphasis on programs and evaluations. The value base of consultation or interventions is either neglected or mentioned only in passing. This is unfortunate because community psychology has more than techniques and research approaches to offer. School interventions need to be based on a comprehensive framework that integrates values, research, and action, the three pillars of commu-

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nity psychology (Rappaport, 1977). The field can offer a holistic set of values that can help interventionists integrate moral values with research and action in schools. Although the majority of published descriptions of school interventions emphasize the methodological and evaluative components of programs, in our article we address the values and interpersonal dimensions of interventions, a somewhat neglected topic in the literature.

A discussion of how community psychology values inform school interventions is needed because initiatives that focus exclusively on techniques, such as self-help or preventive early interventions, run the risk of advancing certain values but neglecting equally important others. For example, a prevention program may be designed to enhance caring and compassion and health in a group of children but may neglect to address other key values such as self-determination and distributive justice. Having a clear framework will help us to be aware of which principles we are upholding and which ones we may be neglecting. This is important because neglecting important values can result in harm to the population we wish to help. If we advanced the single value of caring and compassion without considering the equitable distribution of resources within a school or a community, we would risk creating the impression that all that is needed to improve a situation is simply more empathy. Empathy is crucial but insufficient to solve personal and social problems rooted in lack of access to resources. Neglecting to address availability of resources perpetuates stressful conditions that can only be minimally alleviated by caring and compassion. Perpetuating systemic stressful conditions is harmful to the vulnerable populations we intend to help.

An additional reason for having an explicit value base is that such a framework draws attention to the interpersonal dimension of preventive interventions. The relationships that develop between researchers and key stakeholders in a setting are not often discussed in the literature on preventive interventions. However, partnerships between researchers and stakeholders are critical to the development and implementation of prevention programs. Having a value base that includes respect for diversity and an emphasis on stakeholder participation implies that each person and group has something to contribute and something to learn from their participation in the intervention. Recognition of this diversity is important in the struggle to come up with a common purpose, program, and plan.

In this article we have two main objectives. The first is to introduce a value-based framework for planning in educational settings. The second objective is to provide a case illustration of this framework in action. The

values and processes used in a consultation with a secondary school community in southwestern Ontario, Canada, are presented. The unique contribution of this article lies in our articulation of community psychology values and their application in school settings. In this article we go beyond a discussion of values and principles. We present an approach to consultation that is ethically justifiable and, we believe, effective.

When we began the consultation work described in the case study, we had not yet articulated the following framework. Essentially, the value-based framework is a post hoc conceptualization of the process. Since withdrawing from the school, we have been involved in a number of ventures that have emphasized the need to examine how well we advance the values of community psychology in our work (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997) and the benefits of implementing value-based frameworks in consultation with organizations (Peirson, Prilleltensky, Nelson, & Gould, in press; Prilleltensky, Peirson, Gould, & Nelson, in press). On reflection, we discovered that we were able to translate our experiences in the school setting into a viable and morally responsible approach to consultation. Admittedly, the process we engaged in might have been more comprehensive and more sensitive had we the foresight to develop the framework prior to commencing the consultation. However, we offer our hindsight as a guide for others who may be embarking on consultation processes within educational contexts or elsewhere.

A VALUE-BASED FRAMEWORK
FOR SCHOOL CONSULTATION

In this section we present a framework for school consultation based on community psychology values. In Table 1 we give an overview of the main values and guiding concepts and their application to school consultation. To explicate our framework, we provide a background and rationale for the selection of these values and specific guidelines for the application of values and guiding concepts to school consultation.

Like Baier (1973), we define values as ideals, principles, and practices that confer benefits to individuals and communities. The values presented in Table 1 have a well-established tradition within community psychology and have been reviewed at length by Prilleltensky and Nelson (1997). The values we present are caring and compassion, health, self-determination/participation, human diversity, and distributive justice. Although some have been more emphasized than others at different times, they are all essential values and each brings a unique contribution to community psychology and school consultation.

TABLE 1
The Application of Community Psychology Values and Guiding Concepts to School Consultation

Values	Guiding Concepts	Application to School Consultation
Caring and compassion The expression of care, empathy, and concern for the physical and emotional well-being of others	Psychological sense of community Social support Self-help	Attention should be paid to the well-being of all stakeholders involved in the consultative process. Their physical and emotional needs should be taken into account. Efforts should be made to ensure that everyone feels comfortable, to establish trust, to encourage peer support for involvement, and to recognize efforts.
Health A state of physical and emotional well-being that is intrinsically beneficial and extrinsically instrumental in pursuing self-determination	Prevention Health promotion Pursuit of wellness	Consultants should help school communities reframe issues and develop primary prevention strategies that seek not only to reduce risk factors related to identified problem areas but also to increase protective factors, social support, and coping skills.
Self-determination and participation The ability of individuals to pursue chosen goals and participate in decisions affecting their lives	Empowerment Citizen participation	Ensure opportunities for meaningful input from all stakeholder groups in the school setting, from those with the most decision-making power—such as administrators—to those with the least—such as students. All stakeholders must decide for themselves what kinds of changes and programs are important and necessary to meet their needs. The impetus for making changes or developing programs should come from within the school community. Changes and programs must be tailored to meet the particular needs of the school setting. Consultation processes should provide the school with the necessary tools to effect desired changes, not with prefabricated solutions.
Human diversity Respect and appreciation for diverse social identities and for people's ability to define themselves	Respect for diversity Cultural sensitivity	Attention should be paid to the diverse identities, backgrounds, degree of power, and level of abilities of the various constituency groups of the school. Each group has different needs and priorities. Affording them voice and choice in school life will enhance their well-being and make sure that the agenda for change is not driven exclusively by the powerful people in the school community.
Distributive justice The fair and equitable allocation of bargaining power, resources, and obligations in society	Justice and equality Political education Oppression	All stakeholder groups must share in the responsibilities and work required to make changes and deliver programs. Consultants should be aware of power differences and try to equalize power among partners of change. An effort should be made to ensure that a person or group are not adversely affected by innovations suggested.

Caring and Compassion

This value represents the basic moral motivation to look after someone else's well-being. It is difficult to imagine the relevance of other values in the absence of this one, for empathy is at the core of altruistic actions. This value was first given prominence in community psychology in the 1960s, a time when communities were breaking down and people were feeling increasingly isolated. The desire for caring and compassion was captured in Sarason's (1988) sense-of-community metaphor. The need for social support, feelings of belonging, acceptance, and emotional bonding were given voice in Sarason's felicitous expression. Through self-help groups and social support, community psychologists help to promote feelings of solidarity (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1994; Lavoie, Borkman, & Gidron, 1994; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Newbrough, 1995), something that professionals cannot give to communities but that communities need to foster by themselves (McKnight, 1995).

A successful consultation process requires that participants feel safe and comfortable. Guided by the value of caring and compassion, we should ensure that everyone involved in a consultative process is feeling accepted and valued in the process. Time and space should be provided during the consultative process to check how people are feeling about the way issues are being handled. It would be a mistake to engage immediately in problem solving when parents, teachers, or students are not feeling accepted by the rest of the group. There must be time for the development of trust among partners in the consultation process (Cherniss, Trickett, D'Antonio, & Tracy, 1982; Trickett, 1991).

Health

Improving people's health is an expression of caring and compassion. The primary value of emotional and physical health is indeed a constitutive dimension of community psychology. Founding community psychologists introduced prevention and health promotion concepts to the mental health field (Rosenblum, 1971). Early, proactive interventions have been part of the community psychology paradigm since the inception of the discipline. The concept of health is understood in ecological terms of interdependence among individuals, families, communities, and society in general. The attainment of health involves much more than the reduction of deficits; it also entails the promotion of competencies and protective factors. Community psychology's comprehensive approach to health can be understood in terms of the pursuit of wellness (Cowen, 1994).

Community psychology's guiding concepts draw attention to organizational and structural domains that need to be addressed. This emphasis is apparent when we examine the value of health. Psychologists in schools typically operate in a reactive and person-centered mode, waiting for children to be referred for assessment or therapy (Prilleltensky, 1994a). This modus operandi, inherited from the medical model, implies a partial vision of health. Community psychology's vision of health is much more comprehensive (Weissberg & Elias, 1993). It seeks to promote health by preventing problems before they occur and by strengthening protective factors (Cowen, 1994; Rae-Grant, 1994). The value of health requires a paradigm shift from deficit reduction to competency building and from a person-centered focus to system-level and population-based interventions. Community psychologists often design, implement, and evaluate prevention and health promotion programs for children and youth in school settings (Bond & Compas, 1989).

Self-Determination and Participation

Caring and compassion are manifested when we afford people a say in their lives, an act with many health-promoting qualities. To amplify people's voices we should promote their self-determination. The values of self-determination and participation have been prominent in community psychology since the 1980s. They inform research, theory, and action (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman & Perkins, 1995). Concepts such as empowerment and citizen participation are based on the importance of having a voice in decisions affecting one's life. However, for self-determination and empowerment to have any meaning, voice has to be accompanied by choice. Otherwise, people just express their preferences but are not afforded a chance to transform their wishes into realities. Based on the assumption that those lacking in power are those who need empowerment the most, empowering interventions are designed to enhance the degree of control vulnerable individuals exercise over their lives (Lord & Hutchison, 1993). When successful, these actions and policies lead to empowering outcomes—greater feelings of control and actual decision-making power (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988).

To encourage self-determination and participation we should acknowledge the contributions of each person to the process of school consultation (Battistich, Elias, & Branden-Muller, 1992; Cherniss et al., 1982; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Holtzman, 1992; Peirson & Prilleltensky, 1994; Sarason, 1982). Moreover, we should make an effort to make meetings a comfortable place to express opinions. Many of us take for granted that the best way to talk about a child's problem is in the counselor's office with teachers,

principal, or vice-principal present. Isaac Prilleltensky remembers vividly how a parent stood in front of the school in anticipation of such dreaded meeting and could not bring herself to step into the school. Subsequently, we learned that she had horrible experiences at school herself and the idea of meeting school officials paralyzed her.

Respecting Human Diversity

The value of human diversity draws attention to the fact that self-determination cannot be achieved unless we truly respect people's diverse social identities and right to define themselves (Taylor, 1992). Imposing dominant norms on minorities undermines their ability to develop their own identity and pursue their own goals. In the absence of respect for human diversity, we treat different people as if they were all the same and we force them to endorse other people's cultures and aspirations (Fowers & Richardson, 1996; Kane, 1994). Rappaport (1977) recognized cultural diversity as a key value in community psychology 20 years ago. Recently, the field has become increasingly more aware of the pressing need to attend to issues related to gender (Mulvey, 1988), sexual orientation (D'Augelli, 1994), ethnic and racial diversity (McNicoll & Rousseau, 1993; Trickett, Watts, & Birman, 1994), and disability (Fawcett et al., 1994). Sensitivity to diversity has become a criterion for appropriate analysis and intervention in community psychology.

The mode of communication with parents or children in school consultation is relevant to the issue of human diversity. We sometimes forget how professionalized our modus operandi has become. Although this may seem a trivial point, we do impose our way of solving problems on parents and students. We have agendas and formal meetings and expect everyone to suppress many of their true feelings so business can follow proper decorum. Could we not try to ask parents and children how they may feel more comfortable dealing with problems? We know that many immigrant parents, for example, have considerable difficulty fitting into the traditional format of professional-driven problem solving (Prilleltensky, 1993). When we do not question the applicability of our taken-for-granted practices to other populations we suppress meaningful dialogue by assuming that our way is the best way.

Distributive Justice

The fulfillment of all the previous values hinges on the amount of bargaining power and resources people have. This is why distributive justice is such an important construct. Distributive justice is concerned with the fair

and equitable allocation of bargaining powers, resources, and burdens in society (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997). Without an even distribution of social goods, many people cannot meet their basic needs because they lack access to health care, to educational opportunities, and to other means of pursuing wellness (Albee, 1986). Community psychologists regard social justice as a fundamental human right, indispensable for the well-being of vulnerable populations in general and of children in particular (Albee, Joffe, & Dusenbury, 1988; Prilleltensky, 1994b).

Partners come to the school consultation process with different amounts of power. This is why we should pay attention to distributive justice and the bargaining power consultants and consultees have. In the school setting, parents from marginalized groups typically have less power than do school officials (Gruber & Trickett, 1987). It goes without saying that students have less power than do parents and teachers. At every step of the consultative process, we should ask ourselves who has more power, whose interests are being served, and what we can do to minimize power differences.

As we have argued elsewhere (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 1997), the values of caring and compassion, health, self-determination/participation, human diversity, and distributive justice provide the moral foundation for community psychology's interventions. We have shown in this section why they are important and how they inform the field of community psychology. In the next section, we discuss the application of these values in a case study.

CASE STUDY

To describe the development of the consultative process that occurred between ourselves and a secondary school community, we have adapted a model of consultation that includes the four stages: preentry, entry, work, and separation (Serrano-García, 1990). We attempt to show how the values of caring and compassion, health, self-determination/participation, human diversity, and distributive justice were promoted throughout these stages using selected examples from our experiences in the setting. First, however, we provide a brief description of the school community.

Setting

The secondary school depicted in the case study is located in a medium-size city in southwestern Ontario, Canada. The school is traditional in terms of its physical space. That is, the building is old but updated, with multiple floors, individual classrooms, and locker-lined hallways. It houses, among

other features, adjoining administrative offices, a large guidance department, a library, a theater/auditorium, a cafeteria, and a gymnasium. Consistent with the current system in Ontario, classes are offered to students in Grade 9 (average age is 14) through Ontario Academic Credits, which is the equivalent of Grade 13 (average age is 18). During the consultation process, the school experienced an influx of students. In 1990–91, when our involvement began, there were about 1,300 students enrolled in the school. By 1993–94, the final year of the consultation process, this number had increased dramatically to approximately 1,700 students. The teaching and staff composition did not change markedly during the consultation period; about 100 teachers and staff were working at the school. However, a significant administrative change took place with the appointment of a new principal at the beginning of the 1994–95 school year.

Preentry Phase

The value of health is best illustrated in the reconceptualization process that occurred during the preentry phase of the consultation (see Table 1). During the 1990–91 school year, a graduate student, supervised by Geoffrey Nelson, conducted a multimethod needs and resources assessment to determine the need for a suicide prevention program at the school (Somerville, 1991). A primary outcome of this needs assessment was a "reframing" of the issues. Whereas the initial plan was to acquire external funding for a student-centered suicide education and awareness program, the recommendations flowing from the needs assessment suggested (a) shifting the focus away from an emphasis on suicide to an examination of key risk and protective factors related to suicide; (b) the development of a primary prevention model that would seek to decrease risk factors, youth stress, and hassles and to increase protective factors, social support and coping skills; and (c) the examination of ways in which the school could implement programs using existing resources (Nelson, Prilleltensky, Chris, Somerville, & Peirson, 1992). At this point, Isaac Prilleltensky and Leslea Peirson (a psychology professor and a graduate student, respectively) became involved to assist the school community in moving forward with these recommendations.

Entry Phase

At some level, all five values described in Table 1 were enacted during the entry phase. The value of self-determination and participation was present

from the beginning of the process. Once a problem was identified through the needs assessment, specifically, high levels of student stress and low levels of social support and coping skills, the school played a central role in initiating a change process that would be guided by stakeholders from its community. After Prilleltensky and Peirson were engaged as consultants, the next step was to create a committee composed of representatives from the various stakeholder groups with a mandate to provide direction and recommendations for improving the school climate and the well-being of all members of the school community.

Much care and thought went into the formation of the Students, Teachers, External consultants, and Parents (STEP) committee (this name, which was suggested by one of the teachers and unanimously adopted by all members, reflected the partnership among the constituents and identified the committee's role in initiating steps to improve well-being within the school community). Prior to establishing the committee, we met with a guidance counselor, our primary contact within the school, to discuss how to best go about convening an appropriate group of people. To ensure opportunities for meaningful participation, it was agreed that there must be representation from as many stakeholder groups in the school community as possible. The committee experienced some change in membership over its 3-year history due to students graduating, competing commitments for teachers, interest from new volunteers, and so forth. In addition to Prilleltensky and Peirson, a guidance counselor and a consultant from the board of education were involved throughout the life of the committee. Each year a number of Grade 12 students enrolled in a Peer Helping course were asked to join the group. Parent members were solicited mainly by addressing the Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) for volunteers. Also, a couple of parents became interested in and part of the committee after their children became involved. Staff meetings were used to invite the participation of teachers, staff, and administrators. Membership on the committee was voluntary, although students did receive additional credit in the Peer Helping course for their involvement.

Integrating multiple stakeholder groups in one organization necessitated that we also pay attention to the values of human diversity and distributive justice and that we recognize, and where possible, balance existing power differentials. Acknowledging some truth in the adage that "there is greater strength in numbers," one tactic that we used to offset typical power imbalances within the committee was to request the involvement of a greater number of students and parents than teachers, staff, and consultants. Observations of member participation and comments from members themselves validated our speculations that stu-

dents and parents would participate to a greater extent if they felt supported and were surrounded by their peers.

Promoting the values of caring and compassion was essential to facilitate the involvement of all members of the committee, but particularly of the student and parent members. Conscious attention was devoted to many different aspects of the consultative process to address the physical and emotional needs of the committee members (Altman, 1993; Cherniss, 1991; Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Peirson & Prilleltensky, 1994; Sarason, 1982; Trickett, 1991; Weinstein et al., 1991). Meetings were held in the student services area of the building and were scheduled for times that suited as many members as possible. Refreshments were almost always provided. We intentionally limited the use of "psychological jargon" preferring, instead, to use simple language. For example, when we discussed implementing systems-level change at the school, we talked of "changing the way the school was run." Time was always reserved to introduce and welcome new members to the committee and for members to share and be recognized for their accomplishments. Agendas and minutes also included welcome messages, notes of appreciation, and praise for work well done. In our view, such modest efforts to be mindful of the physical and emotional needs of the committee members paid off in dividends of enhanced participation.

The values of self-determination and participation were further manifested in the collective process of defining how the committee would work. In accordance with the reframing that occurred as a result of the needs assessment, with the literature on effective consultation (see Peirson, 1993, for a review of this literature), and with the philosophy of empowerment, the STEP committee used a portion of an initial meeting to agree on and draft a list of standards that would direct our work. The value of self-determination and participation is clearly evident in two of the standards identified by the group. First, in an effort to enrich the content of interventions, to enhance commitment, and to improve the school atmosphere, we would attempt to generate input from all the stakeholders at the school including students, teachers, parents, administrators, and clerical and other support staff. Second, to engender initiatives that would be self-sufficient, we would strive to create programs that would be owned and operated by the school. A third objective of the committee was to advocate structural as opposed to person-centered changes to advance the value of health. Human diversity and distributive justice were captured in the final standard. To develop interventions that would benefit everyone concerned, we would consider the needs of particular groups and be alert

to unintentional, although adverse, impacts on some stakeholders in the community.

Work Phase

With the values of self-determination and participation in mind, one of the first "work" activities the 1991–92 STEP committee engaged in was conducting a survey of the various stakeholders to learn what changes they would like to see in their school community. To gather this information, we developed a one-question survey that asked respondents to identify aspects of the school that could be changed. The surveys were distributed to all students by homeroom teachers, and signs were posted to inform teachers and staff where to pick up and return surveys. The students on the committee collected, and with assistance from Peirson, sorted the hundreds of completed surveys. Like the survey, the "analysis" was simple; similar answers were grouped and an inventory of the responses was prepared for use during the next committee meeting.

More than 40 ideas for change were identified through the poll. Recognizing that we could not reasonably deal with all of the suggestions, the committee agreed to engage in a prioritizing exercise. After dividing the items into short-term and long-term goals, each member was asked to rank order the items according to what he or she thought was most important for the committee to consider. The lists were merged, and through consensus we decided on seven immediate priorities. Three short-term goals were selected: improving the physical appearance of the building, acknowledging teachers' work and efforts, and increasing students' input into course design and method of teaching. The four long-term objectives identified included setting up a mentorship system for all students; creating support networks among students, teachers, and parents; developing more alternative programs for students who experience difficulties; and establishing a common lunch period during which students could socialize. Although the long-term priorities were more responsive to the recommendations of the needs assessment, the short-term goals provided the committee members with an agenda that was immediately achievable; would provide a sense of achievement; and would, we hoped, enhance people's interest in and energy for some of the larger, more complex initiatives.

Throughout the 3 years the committee was in existence, we continued to ask for input, feedback, and participation from stakeholder groups within the school community. For example, various committee members attended and presented at staff and PTA meetings, students surveyed their peers,

and multiple focus groups and interviews were conducted in relation to the mentorship program initiative (see Peirson, 1993).

An interesting development in the structure of the committee, occurring in the transition to the 2nd year, clearly demonstrates the value of distributive justice.

> While the 1992–93 STEP Committee shared the previous Committee's vision of an improved school climate and improved well-being for all members of the school's community, there was an important difference in the way the two Committees approached their work. The first STEP Committee tended to operate more as a working committee than as a steering committee. Although we accomplished some important work, the responsibility for initiating change and "doing the work" remained mostly within our small group of 10 to 12 people. ... Rather than individuals from the STEP Committee accepting primary responsibility for "doing the work," the plan was to energize those groups, classes, clubs and so on, that possessed the resources for change, to actually implement change. Consequently, the structure of the 1992–93 committee was modified to accommodate the above concern so that we worked as a steering committee that existed to explore and define priority issues that needed to be addressed within the school community and to link up the various resources within the school that would best be able to implement successful changes. (Peirson, 1993, p. 5)

For example, in relation to our goal of improving the physical appearance of the building some members of the 1991–92 committee took it on themselves to organize and maintain new bulletin boards and displays. The next year we explored other resources within the school that could adopt this priority. We approached members of the art department with a request for assistance and were pleasantly surprised when a number of teachers and students enthusiastically accepted responsibility. Not only did this group pick up where we left off but it also created its own ideas for projects, including an elaborate mural that was painted on a cafeteria wall.

Separation Phase

One of our main responsibilities as consultants was to help with the long-term objective of developing a schoolwide preventive peer mentoring program for students. Originally, it was expected that we would come up with the final program plan. However, after some thought and further discussion with the committee, we agreed that developing the actual program was not the right next step and that it was not appropriate for us, as consultants, to advocate our version of a mentoring program. Instead, we

agreed that our primary role would be to help lay the groundwork for designing a mentoring program that would account for the needs of and resources available to the particular school community. Consistent with the values of self-determination and participation, we did not provide a pre-fabricated program or a detailed "how-to" manual. Instead, the product was a blueprint for action that summarized the culture of change within the school and offered recommendations for proceeding with the development of a mentoring program (see Peirson, 1993). Our goal was to equip the school community with a tool that would assist them in effecting desired changes and a mentoring program that would respond to their needs.

Much of the work done by the 1993–94 STEP committee was to use the "blueprint" we provided to develop a pilot mentorship program that would commence in September 1994. A teacher interested in the field of guidance was given the role of program coordinator. The administration reduced her teaching responsibilities so half of her time would be devoted to the program and to a small caseload of students. Initially, the plan was to implement the program on a small scale, matching students in a few Grade 9 classes with students in Grade 11 classes. Each year a new group of students would become introduced to the program. It was expected that eventually all students in the school would be involved in 2 one-to-one relationships: one in which they gave support and one in which they received support. Under these conditions, the student body would ultimately become an interconnected "web of support" (Saulnier, 1982).

During a follow-up call to a key stakeholder in the process, we learned that the mentorship program was initiated during the 1994–95 school year. However, the program did not continue the next year. According to our informant, there were two factors that she thought contributed to the unsuccessful implementation of the program. First and foremost, the teacher acting as the program coordinator was not provided with adequate supervision or follow-up to effectively manage the project. Second, although the school stakeholders demonstrated an interest in the program and were supportive of the general idea, our informant doubts that enough people within the community had a full understanding of the purpose and goals of the mentorship system. Although the mentoring program did not continue past the 1994–95 year, the key informant from the school stated that the school community had learned important lessons in the attempt that could serve to improve any future attempts at implementing similar types of programs.

After 3 years, the STEP committee adjourned at the end of the 1993–94 school year. Although there was still much that the committee could have done, there were already a number of long-term initiatives under way and a number of the key players were tired. We respected the decision of key

stakeholders, including the committee's members, to suspend initiating any additional changes to the school or developing any new programs through the STEP committee. However, as we withdrew from the setting, our obligation to the value of caring and compassion combined with our commitment to the school motivated us to offer our continued support in case anything should arise that we could be of assistance with in the future.

DISCUSSION

In this article, we outlined the importance of a value-based framework for action and research and illustrated this with a case study of a school consultation. We noted earlier that action and research projects that do not have an explicit value-based framework may inadvertently neglect some important values. In this section, we discuss the lessons that we learned in attempting to implement a value-based framework and their implications for practice in school consultation.

First, we learned that not all values can be given the same amount of emphasis at any point in the consultation process. Social norms and the particular culture of the school determine the configuration of values at a certain place and time (Sarason, 1982, 1990). Consequently, some values are more prominent than others. In the entry phase of the consultation, we focused on the value of self-determination/participation, both in the process of the STEP committee and in the process of engaging the entire school community in generating ideas for change. Also, the values of health and caring and compassion are reflected in the plan to develop a mentoring program that would promote support networks and promote the well-being of the student body. In retrospect, we do not believe that we paid sufficient attention to the values of diversity and distributive justice. The unique experiences of women and men students, students from immigrant families, students with disabilities, and students from low-income families, for example, could have been more explicitly addressed.

In the early stages of our consultation, we gave particular emphasis to the value of self-determination/participation because we believed that building a sense of ownership and inclusion was critical in setting the groundwork for future interventions. In particular, we wanted to bring parents and students, two groups who are often excluded in school planning, into the process of school change (Gruber & Trickett, 1987). By fostering a process of ownership and inclusion, we strove to help the school to develop programs that would continue after we left the setting. One of the strengths of our value-based framework is that there is an explicit awareness of which values are in the foreground and which values are in

the background at any point. Thus, values that are relatively neglected at one point can be emphasized at another point. An implication for the practice of school consultation is that in the long run, all of the values should receive some degree of attention.

A second lesson that we learned is that value-based school consultation requires that consultants pay attention to the differences in power of the various groups and that they try to minimize them. The school consists of various groups with vastly different amounts of power (Sarason, 1990). Administrators, teachers, parents, staff, custodians, and students differ greatly in their degree of control over school life. The values of self-determination/participation, human diversity, and distributive justice require that we pay attention to the differing degrees of power of stakeholders. This is crucial if the needs and interests of the powerless are to be advanced. Although power differences cannot be erased, attempts at moderating them are essential to having the voices of the powerless heard (Fowers & Richardson, 1996). This requires identifying power differences and creating structures for the safe expression of the needs of all school stakeholders.

In the school consultation, we strove to help children and parents feel safe in expressing their needs both within the STEP committee and within the larger school community. Having a majority of parents and students on the committee, keeping the meetings informal, not using professional jargon, and encouraging participation of students and parents were helpful strategies for amplifying the voices of these constituencies. Similarly, Cameron, Peirson, and Pancer (1994) found that such methods were important for promoting the participation of community residents in the management of the Better Beginnings, Better Futures prevention project. Thus, an implication of this finding for school consultation is that strategies to promote student and parent involvement need to be utilized.

Another lesson that we learned is that the implementation of values should not be restricted to the individual level but should be expanded to the entire school and community context. Although we are obviously invested in promoting the well-being of individual children, parents, and teachers, their personal well-being is intimately tied to the well-being of the entire school and of the community in general. Although it is not always possible to launch comprehensive school and community interventions to change adverse conditions, it is crucial to see how the welfare of individuals is linked to the social ecologies that exist where they live, study, and work (Trickett & Birman, 1989).

Person-centered approaches such as assessment, therapy, and the acquisition of social skills and learning strategies are very legitimate, but

often they are not enough. We found that when we surveyed members of the school community regarding changes that they would like to see in the school, many of their suggestions reflected schoolwide changes. Ideas such as student input on the curriculum, a mentoring program for all students, and having a common lunch period all focus on changing the school as a system. Other community psychologists have shown how changes in school structures can promote positive outcomes for students at risk (Bond & Compas, 1989; Rae-Grant, 1994). The Yale New Haven Primary Prevention Project, which consists of a parent participation program, a school planning and management team, and attention to the specific educational needs of children, is an example of a successful system-based approach (Cauce, Comer, & Schwartz, 1987). The School Transition Environment Program is another example of how school reorganization can be used effectively to help students with the transition to high school (Felner & Adan, 1988).

One final lesson that we learned is that consultation that focuses on implementing a set of values, reducing power differences, and changing the culture of the school is a long-term process. The conventional wisdom about consultation in schools and other settings is that the consultant's goal is to work himself or herself out of a job. Our experience in this particular school consultation is that after one set of work goals is accomplished, another set emerges. Although we were involved in the setting for 4 years of planning, the implementation of the mentoring program appeared to require further support from us.

The need to clarify the goals of the intervention and provide training and support to students and teachers was noted by our key informant. These observations are consistent with numerous claims in the literature that proper training and support is needed for individuals implementing school programs (Battistich, Elias, & Branden-Muller, 1992; Cullen, 1993; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Kline & Snow, 1993; Peirson & Prilleltensky, 1994) and that the purpose and goals of programs need to be clear to all members of the school community (Comer, 1980; Cullen, 1993; Curl, 1993; Dimock, 1992; Elias & Weissberg, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Peirson & Prilleltensky, 1994). Thus, value-based consultation in the schools requires a process of long-term engagement on the part of both the consultants and the internal change agents.

In summary, we presented a value-based framework and used a case example to illustrate an attempt at implementation of the framework. Although we do not pretend that our framework applies in all instances and in all contexts, we do believe the framework is a useful way of approaching school consultation. Thus, we encourage others to use the

value-based framework in their own consultative processes. We also recognize that living up to all the values we espouse can be a humbling experience and, as we have shown, it is not always possible to do justice to all the values at any particular point. Still, we believe that consultants should consider not only the techniques but also the values that underlie the approach they adopt. In our view, for consultation processes to have integrity, consultants must pay attention to the values they wish to advance.

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