Virtual School Counselors

Research question:

• What are the day-to-day activities, positive aspects, challenges, unique skills, & ethical issues of VSCs?

Qualitative Study:

- Interviews + Survey
- 4/7 Florida Virtual School VSCs responded

Findings (highlights):

- Day-to-Day Activities
 - Primarily educational advising, courseloads

Wordle Compilation of Responses to the Reasons Students Contact FLVS Counselors



- On phone with students/parents
- Available 8-8 but with flexibility
- Student/Counselor Ratio: 30,000:1

• Other Activities:

- Webinars on goal-setting, self-esteem,
 career development, etc. (27 in 2011-2012) with 93 average attending
- Consultation sessions with FLVS instructors
- Benefits:
 - Enjoy working with students all day
 - Believe they are making a difference
 - Feel helpful & connected all day
- Challenges:
 - Denied access (when traditional counselors deny students access to FLVS courses)
 - Socializing with colleagues
 - Difficulty reading between the lines

Ethical Situations Encountered?

The following were endorsed by all:

- ✓ acting on abuse/neglect suspicions
- \checkmark acting on information of danger to self or others
- \checkmark confidentiality of student records
- ✓ denied student access to FLVS services (from brick/mortar schools)
- \checkmark dual relationships
- ✓ informed consent
- \checkmark parental rights
- ✓ special needs/accommodations/inclusion
- \checkmark student confidentiality and/or privacy

IMPACTS

On Field

• currently academic, future will include more personal counseling

On Practice

- majority of time spent on service delivery **On Training**
- Counseling student practicum in online environmentsIntegration of technology into existing courses
- via technology
- Boundaries (turning off computer)
- Differs from F2F School Counseling:
 - New laws, especially for home schooling
 - Multi-tasking, learning a new platform
 - Working independently
 - Working creatively to find ways to collaborate & connect with colleagues

NEXT???

Submitted to *Professional School Counseling*Future research:

- How do others perceive VSCs' role?
- relationship between VSCS' job performance, career satisfaction, and future career decisions?
- Outcome studies on impact of VCS interventions
- Increase generalizability through a national study

Debra S. Osborn

Associate Professor Educational Psychology & Learning Systems 850.644.3742 (O); 850.644.8776(fax) dosborn@fsu.edu