

MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT SCHOOL COUNSELORS

1. When a student is sent or called to the school counselor's office, it is because he/she is in trouble.

TRUTH: *The school counselor is not here to judge, to scold or punish the student. She might want to see you to talk about a particular issue that may have been brought up by a teacher, your parent, or another student. You don't need to be nervous; counselors see students to help fix problems, not because they are "in trouble."*

2. Students that need a school counselor are "crazy", or have something "wrong going on in their heads".

TRUTH: *Everyone can benefit from talking to someone once in a while. We all have bad days. That does not mean that there is something wrong with us. It is the opposite! If you talk to a counselor, it means you are smart enough to realize that you might benefit from someone else's point of view. The School Counselor is NOT A THERAPIST. Lots of people have seen a school counselor at some point in their lives, and most of them have found it helpful. Even some of your friends have talked to the counselor! You just do not know it, because those visits are CONFIDENTIAL. Sure, counselors see people with serious problems, but most of their visitors are just regular students going through a rough day.*

3. The counselor is going to boss me around and tell me what to do.

TRUTH: *Actually, the best counselors help kids solve their own problems. They may make suggestions, but teaching problem-solving skills is one of their main goals. One of the benefits of talking to a counselor is that she has been around for a while, so chances are good that she has seen a problem like yours before. That means that she probably has some good ideas for you to try, and will help you pick the one that seems right for you.*

4. If I talk to a counselor, all of the other kids will know and they will hassle me about it.

TRUTH: *First of all, your sessions with the counselor are confidential, so unless you tell one of your friends, no one really has to know. Second, you might be surprised to learn that many kids at your school see the counselor from time to time. More and more kids are realizing that counselors can help them, and they are actively seeking out that help.*

5. The counselor is going to tell what I say to my teachers, and peers.

TRUTH: *Pretty much everything you say to a school counselor is confidential, which means that it will be kept private. There are a few exceptions:*

- *you or someone else is getting hurt or is in danger*
- *you or someone else is involved with something illegal.*

In these cases, counselors are required to share the information with the appropriate people. Of course, there may be issues that come up that a counselor might encourage you to share with teachers or parents, but the decision is yours.