

Write and Discuss

Using Pre-referral Interventions

- (1) Review the section on “Pre-referral Process” in *School-Based Client Consultation, Referral, and Management of Care* (pp. 19 - 23).
- (2) Make some brief notes on what you already do and what strategies you probably will add.

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- (3) Share your thoughts about this informally with colleagues/friends or in a study group.
- (4) In what ways did the discussion lead to changes in your initial response?

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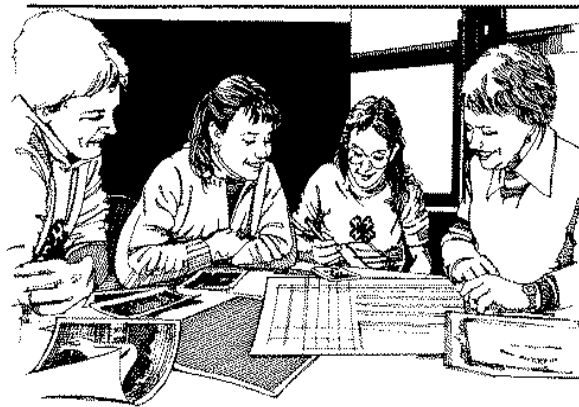


Excerpt From

*From the Center's Clearinghouse ...**

A Technical Aid Packet on

**School-Based Client Consultation,
Referral, and Management of Care**



This document is a hardcopy version of a resource that can be downloaded at no cost from the Center's website (<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>)

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A guide for teachers and other school staff regarding . . .

The Prereferral Process

When a student is seen as having problems, the following steps may be helpful.

Related guidelines and materials are attached.

- Step 1:** Based on your work with the student, *formulate a description* of the student's problem.

- Step 2:** Have a *discussion* to get the student's view. You may want to include the family.

- Step 3:** Try *new strategies* in the classroom based on your discussion.

- Step 4:** If the new strategies don't work, *talk to others* at school to learn about additional approaches they have found helpful.

- Step 5:** If necessary, use the *school's referral processes* to ask for additional support services.

- Step 6:** Work with referral resources to *coordinate your efforts* with theirs for classroom success.

Step 1: Based on your work with the student, *formulate a description* of the student's problem (use the checklist as an aid) and then request a Triage Review (see Appendix A).

A Checklist to Aid in Describing the Problem

Teacher's Name: _____ Rm. _____ Date _____

Extensive assessment is not necessary in initially identifying a student about whom you are concerned. If a student is having a significant learning problem or is misbehaving or seems extremely disturbed, begin by checking off those items below that are concerning you.

Student's name: _____ Birth date: _____ Grade: _____

Social Problems

- Aggressive
- Shy
- Overactive
- _____

Achievement problems

- Poor skills
- Low motivation
- _____

Overall academic performance

- Above grade level
- At grade level
- Slightly below grade level
- Well below grade level

Absent from school

- Less than once/month
- Once/month
- 2-3 times/month
- 4 or more times/month

Other specific concerns:

Comments: If you have information about what is causing the problem, briefly note the specifics here.

Step 2: Have a discussion to get the student's view. You may want to include the family. (See suggestions below).

Exploring the Problem with the Student and Family

As you know the causes of learning, behavior, and emotional problems are hard to analyze. What looks like a learning disability or an attentional problem may be an emotionally-based problem; behavior problems often arise in reaction to learning difficulties; what appears as a school problem may be the result of a problem at home.

It is particularly hard to know the underlying cause of a problem when the student is unmotivated to learn and perform. It will become clearer as you find ways to enhance the student's motivation to perform in class and talk more openly with you.

The following guide is to help you get a more information about a student's problem.

Make personal contact with student (and those in the home). Try to improve your understanding of why the student is having problems and see if you can build a positive working relationship. Special attention should be paid to understanding and addressing factors that may affect the student's intrinsic motivation to learn and perform.

1. Starting out on a positive note: Ask about what the student likes at school and in the class (if anything).
2. Ask about outside interests and "hobbies."
3. Ask about what the student doesn't like at school and in the class.
4. Explore with the student what it is that makes the things disliked (e.g., Are the assignments seen as too hard? Is the student embarrassed because others will think s/he does not have the ability to do assignments? Do others pick on the student? Are the assignments not seen as interesting?)
5. Explore what other factors the student and those in the home think may be causing the problem?
6. Explore what the student and those in the home think can be done to make things better (including extra support from a volunteer, a peer, etc.).
7. Discuss some new things the student and those in the home would be *willing* to try to make things better.

See student interview form in Appendix A.

Step 3: Try new strategies in the classroom based on your discussion.

Some Things to Try

The following list is meant as a stimulus to suggest specific strategies to try before referring a student for special help.

1. Make changes to (a) improve the match between a student's program and his/her interests and capabilities and (b) try to find ways for the student to have a special, positive status in the program, at the school, in the community. Talk and work with other staff in developing ideas along these lines.
2. Add resources for extra support (aide, volunteers, peer tutors) to help student's efforts to learn and perform. This includes having others cover your duties long enough for you to interact and relate with student as an individual.
3. Discuss with student (and those in the home) why the problems are occurring
4. Special exploration with student to find ways to enhance positive motivation
5. Change regular program/materials/environment to provide a better match with student's interests and skills
6. Provide enrichment options in class and as feasible elsewhere
7. Use volunteers/aide/peers to enhance the student's social support network
8. Special discussion with those in the home to elicit enhanced home involvement in solving the problem
9. Hold another special discussion with the student at which other staff (e.g., counselor, principal) join in to explore reasons for the problem and find ways to enhance positive motivation

Step 4: If the new strategies don't work, talk to others at school to learn about additional approaches they have found helpful.

- Reach out for support/mentoring/coaching
- Participate with others in clusters and teams
- Observe how others teach in ways that effectively address differences in student motivation and capability
- Request additional staff development on working with students who have learning, behavior, and emotional problems

With respect to staff development, there are a variety of topics that might be pursued. These include:

- addressing barriers to learning within the context of a caring, learning community
- ways to train aides, volunteers, and peers to help with targeted students
- specific strategies for mobilizing parent/home involvement in schooling
- using specialist staff for in-class and temporary out-of-class help
- addressing the many transition needs of students.

Step 5: If necessary, use the *school's referral processes* to ask for additional support services.

Step 6: Work with referral resources to *coordinate your efforts* with theirs for classroom success.