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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, FOCUSING ON ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING TRAINING, by TARA SELENE MORGAN was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, FOCUSING ON ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING TRAINING

by
Tara S. Morgan

A concern following school counselors' participation in professional training is whether or not they are able to implement information learned. One such professional training that school counselors attend is Adventure Based Counseling (ABC). ABC groups are effective for addressing a myriad of concerns with young people. ABC groups address problem-solving skills, self-esteem, responsibility, goal setting, cooperation, and interpersonal skills. Although many school counselors have participated in ABC training, there is a lack of research that supports whether they are actually utilizing these techniques with their students. Additionally, current research does not provide information as to how training programs and school dynamics may be improved to allow for increased utilization of ABC with students; therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the barriers that inhibit and the factors that support school counselors' ability to implement information learned from Professional Trainings, with a focus on ABC training. This qualitative study took a phenomenological approach, with a constructivist philosophical stance. Data sources included interviews with school counselors, which provided descriptions of their Professional and ABC training experiences and reasons for either using or not using Professional and ABC activities. The themes included What Professional and ABC training sessions school counselors attended and What they are implementing that they learned from these sessions. In addition, school counselors' various reactions to Professional and ABC training, such as Choice, Type of Delivery,

Presenter Qualities, Time and Applicability were delineated. Results also included information pertaining to the Impact and Logistics of using information learned at Professional and ABC trainings. The results of this study may have important implications for school counselors, counselor educators, and administrators related to the implementation of skills learned from Professional and ABC training experiences. Implications for future research and limitations of this study are discussed.

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT
SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING PARTICIPATION
IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, FOCUSING ON ADVENTURE
BASED COUNSELING TRAINING

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Tara S. Morgan

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Adventure Based Counseling
ABIS	Anti-Bullying Initiative Survey
ASCA	American School Counselor Association
CES	Classroom Environment Scale
EBD	Emotional Behavior Disorder
SSC	Social Skills Checklist
SSRS	Social Skills Rating System

CHAPTER 1

SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Professional school counselors strive to help students with a host of issues. Unlike professional counselors working in private practice who may be able to specialize in certain areas, school counselors must be prepared to address whatever issue students present to them (Kahn, 1999). Students face a variety of issues including divorce, addictions, child abuse, academic troubles, physical disabilities, and mental disorders (Cox, Zhang, & Johnson, 2007; McCarthy, Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, & Guzman, 2010; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Repie, 2005). Therefore, it is imperative that school counselors have techniques and approaches to draw on which enable them to assist students with such diverse concerns. To compound the issue of addressing numerous concerns, school counselors also have limited time to work with students. Often, school counselors have close to five hundred students on their caseload (Akos, Hamm, Mack, & Dunaway, 2007; Sklare, 2004). Therefore, utilization of effective and efficient interventions is essential for school counselors.

Because large caseloads limit the amount of time school counselors can spend with individual students, group counseling has been found to be a beneficial intervention (Borders & Drury, 1992; Paisley & Milsom, 2007; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001; Steen & Kaffenberger, 2007). Group counseling not only allows school counselors to see more than one student at a time, the therapeutic effects of this intervention often yield positive results for young people. Some therapeutic effects gained by students through group counseling include higher amounts of classroom involvement, increased openness with others, increased self-esteem, increased self-control, reduced anxiety, and improved

relationship skills (Bradley, 2001; Larkin & Thyre, 1999; Riddle et al., 1997; Zinck & Littrell, 2000). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) model supports incorporating groups into the general school counseling program's delivery system. ASCA states that responsive services, which include groups, should make up 25% to 40% of a school counseling program's delivery system (ASCA, 2003).

Although groups are a useful intervention, some research has found that school counselors find it difficult to conduct groups (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001). This may be due to logistical issues, time constraints, and lack of knowledge. For instance, many school counselors face resistance from faculty when they want to pull students from class for group counseling sessions (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001; Steen, Bauman, & Smith, 2007). School counselors may not have the time to create a schedule and/or group activities (Dansby, 1996; Steen et al., 2007). In addition, school counselors may not feel that they have sufficient training and knowledge to conduct group counseling (Steen et al., 2007). The combination of these obstacles hinders school counselors' ability to conduct groups. Despite these limitations, it is imperative that school counselors find ways to implement groups because they are an effective approach when working with students. School counselors require specialized training to effectively conduct groups (Steen et al., 2008). One type of group that school counselors may choose to conduct are Adventure Based Counseling (ABC) groups, which require even more specialized training (Schoel & Maizell, 2002).

School counselors must constantly update their skills through professional training in their efforts to address the ever changing needs of students and in order to become effective at conducting groups (Howell et al., 2007; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996;

Splete & Grisdale, 1992). Moreover, the School Counselors' Code of Ethics requires school counselors to stay current by attending professional trainings throughout their career (ASCA, 2010). Although awareness exists about the importance of school counselors participating in professional training, research focused on whether or not school counselors are able to implement information learned at professional training does not exist. Therefore, in this chapter, the author will provide an overview of research related to school counselors and professional development. Then, I will elaborate upon ABC groups and discuss ABC training. Finally, I will describe possible areas for future research related to professional development of school counselors and ABC groups.

School Counselors and Professional Development

Howell et al. (2007) conducted one of the only studies analyzing school counselors' needs in reference to professional development. This was conducted with 226 middle and high school counselors in Utah. Utah requires school counselors to acquire a significant amount of professional development in order to procure recertification, thus many participants in their study noted recertification as their prime motivation for attending professional development trainings. Yet, almost as many responded that updating their skills and personal satisfaction were also reasons for attending trainings. Participants also expressed a need for professional development that is relevant to their job role. In addition, over half of these school counselors personally paid for professional development and attended during non work hours. Ninety percent of participants acquired more points than needed to become recertified. These results speak to the dedication of school counselors to their profession and their robust desire for professional

development. However, similar studies replicated with school counselors in other parts of the country are needed to strengthen these findings.

Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, & Granato's (2004) study focused on school counselors' professional development needs in relation to working with multicultural student populations. Interviews were conducted with 13 school counselors who participated in a seven month multicultural training program designed for school counselors. One result that surfaced, with respect to general professional development, was that it is incumbent upon school systems, counselor educators and others coordinating professional development to solicit input from school counselors about their professional needs in order to provide more relevant training.

Splete and Grisdale (1992) assessed the effectiveness of the Oakland Counselor Academy, a professional development program for school counselors. Questionnaires were given to Oakland school counselors following their participation in the Academy. Results revealed that soliciting school counselors' input, the thoroughness of sessions offered, and time for collaboration with colleagues were variables that increased the success of the Oakland Counselor Academy. Support from local school administrators was cited as another important factor for the success of the program. Allowing time for school counselors to implement activities being learned and then return to the Academy for peer feedback also yielded positive results. Forming bonds with peers that encouraged future opportunities for informal peer feedback were also described as being beneficial. Although numerous types of professional training exist, this manuscript will focus on ABC training, and specifically conducting ABC groups. The following section will

provide the foundation and rationale, a description of, a history of, and research support for ABC groups.

Adventure Based Counseling

Adventure Based Counseling groups are found to be effective for addressing a myriad of concerns, such as a lack of (a) problem solving skills, (b) self-esteem, (c) responsibility, (d) goal setting, (e) cooperation, and (f) interpersonal skills (Glass & Myers, 2001, Glass & Shoffner, 2001). ABC groups incorporate experiential learning and group counseling techniques in indoor or outdoor settings and require intense processing of the activities to facilitate change in behaviors (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). One example of an ABC activity is “Circle the Circle” during which students stand in a circle, holding hands, and their goal is to move two hula hoops around the circle in opposite directions without letting go of each other. The initial attempt is timed and the group then sets a shorter time as a goal. ABC activities such as this encourage the participants to incorporate “goal setting skills, learning to share their personal space with others, and using encouragement to strive for a successful conclusion to the challenge” (Glass & Shoffner, 2001, p. 45).

Along with being able to address a variety of issues, ABC may also work well for those students who are less verbal and need alternative forms of therapy (Moote & Wodarski, 1997). The active approach of ABC may be more beneficial for youth due to their inclination towards physical movement (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). Furthermore, ABC may be especially effective for use in the schools because the benefits gained, such as a sense of cohesiveness, are helpful concepts to build upon in the classroom (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Many populations within the school will experience the benefits of a

student's growth due to their participation in an ABC group (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). For example, student growth in problem-solving skills and responsibility during ABC activities may transfer to their performance in the classroom.

Description

The main concept supporting ABC groups is that "clients are essentially learning by doing" (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2001, p.277). The key to success of ABC groups is that participants are able to experience a life changing skill and then adapt that experience to their personal lives. ABC group leaders assist participants by processing the experience during the group sessions so that the participants are aware of their learning and how they may apply it to their personal lives (Fletcher & Hinkle). The focus on group goals also assists participants in learning how to work with others using healthy communication styles and conflict resolution skills (Glass & Myers, 2001). This is especially beneficial for young people who often need assistance learning how to function with their peers (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Thus, ABC groups allow participants to work towards accomplishing interpersonal and intrapersonal goals. For example, one ABC activity is Shipwreck during which the group participants' goal is to use teamwork to have everyone be able stand on a platform or small mat at the same time (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Although ABC is often conducted outdoors, this is not a necessity. A variety of environments may be utilized (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Gillen & Balkin, 2006; Glass & Myers). This aspect allows school counselors to conduct these groups in schools where there may not be access to appropriate outdoor equipment. For instance, school counselors may use their office with tape on the floor to designate certain spaces for an activity instead of taking students to an outside ropes course (Glass & Shoffner, 2001).

Gaining access to ropes courses may be costly and many schools have limited budgets. The ability to conduct a group in various settings offers school counselors an opportunity to conduct an ABC group, despite possible financial limitations (Gillen & Balkin, 2006; Moote & Wodarski, 1997). The flexibility of ABC group settings may make these groups an attractive choice for school counselors.

The structure of an ABC group is similar to other therapeutic groups in that each participant sets individual goals. However, in addition to these goals, there is also a strong focus on group goals and norms that are mutually established and developed (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). To support these group goals, noncompetitive activities are set up for the entire group during each session. In order to constantly promote growth and learning, the tasks increase in difficulty as a group progresses. Learning occurs when the group leader processes the effects of the activity with group members. One model of processing the groups experience is the PARS model (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). The stages of this model are Reflecting, Understanding and Applying. In the Reflecting stage, group leaders help members remember what actually happened during the activity by comparing and contrasting each member's reactions and perceptions. The intent is to reach some group consensus about what actually occurred during the activity and to understand different points of view. During the next phase, Understanding, the group's goal is to analyze the meaning behind what occurred during the activity. This allows the group to bond and grow together while also promoting growth towards participant's individual goals. However, it is during the last phase of Applying that most of the personal growth occurs. In this phase, participants are encouraged to transfer their learning from the actual group to their outside lives (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). For

instance, if a group member's personal goal is to be more assertive and they exhibited that behavior during group, they are then encouraged to practice that same behavior outside of group in appropriate situations. This learning helps group participants to remember that although group behaviors are important, the intent of ABC is to make changes outside of the group.

History

ABC stems from outdoor therapeutic programs that were utilized with hospital patients and camps for children and adolescents (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). In 1901, the Manhattan State Hospital in New York City had too many patients and was forced to house some of its patients outside in tents. The hospital staff noticed that the patients living in tents were improving both physically and mentally (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). Similarly, after the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco, patients at the Agnew Asylum were forced to live outside in tents and helped with rebuilding. The staff at the Agnew Asylum also noticed that the patients were experiencing positive effects on their well being (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). However, it was not until 1941 when Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt sought to capitalize on the benefits of outdoor living and created the Outward Bound program. Their program was created to assist young people prepare to enter the military in Wales (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Glass & Myers, 2001). The overarching theme of the program was individuals pushing themselves, through physical activities, to their outer limits (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). Kurt Hahn believed that when individuals experienced physical feats (e.g., canoeing through a rough river.) they had not thought possible, they would then transfer that strength to their personal struggles (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). According to Hahn, the main goals of education should be to “ensure

spirit, tenacity, and compassion in students” (Schoel & Maizell, 2002, p. 4). Along with the overarching theme, Outward Bound also incorporated five specific aspects into the program to help young people be prepared to enter the military (a) personal goals, (b) structured activities, (c) experiential risk to enhance learning, (d) small group functioning to enhance leadership skills, and (e) community service (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002).

The Outward Bound program was eventually expanded to include other populations and came to the United States in 1962 (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). The first school to utilize an Outward Bound type program was a high school in Massachusetts. Jerry Pieh created the program and changed the name to Project Adventure. He incorporated adventure counseling techniques with the school’s curriculum, added personal and group goals, and included counseling approaches (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Schoel & Maizell, 2002). Essentially, this was the beginning of ABC groups. The first ABC workshop happened in 1979 and attracted a variety of professionals, including school counselors (Schoel & Maizell, 2002).

Eventually, a shift occurred in outdoor education from a focus on the individual to group dynamics and accomplishments (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). This is significant because it represents the melding of the tenets of group counseling along with adventure aspects to form ABC. ABC is now modeled on group counseling theories utilizing the definitions of group stages (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). Other group counseling techniques are also applied such as screening and assessing participants, having planned therapeutic goals, ensuring group bonding, and appropriate group closure (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). The combination of group techniques and outdoor education tenets makes ABC a unique intervention.

Foundation and Rationale

The answer to why ABC works is one that is based on numerous psychological theories. Even though ABC leaders are able to facilitate the physical activity, they also draw upon psychological theories by applying their counseling skills and knowledge (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). In essence, ABC may be seen as an integrative approach to therapy. For instance, Cognitive theory is often applied in ABC by assisting the participants in understanding how their thoughts are affecting their actions. The added benefit of ABC is that the action is often happening at that very moment. Reality therapy is also infused into ABC by aiding participants in understanding the consequences of their behaviors, accepting consequences of their actions and goal setting. Behavioral reinforcement is also a key aspect of ABC since the group members often serve as reinforcing agents for each other (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Moote & Wodarski, 1997). Moreover, some ABC groups focus on specific behavioral goals whereas others may focus on the overall emotional process leading to change. One such approach is Gestalt theory, which is inherent in ABC since leaders support individuals with experiencing feelings and thoughts in the present moment (Moote & Wodarski, 1997). Finally, Rational Emotive Therapy is incorporated by helping participants examine the actual and imagined risk involved with a physical activity and determining whether or not it is appropriate for them (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). The combination of Rational Emotive Therapy and Gestalt theory is useful in that group leaders may help participants not only examine the risk of a physical activity, but the risk involved with emotional concerns during group such as self disclosure and processing personal feedback (Glass & Shoffner, 2001).

A main rationale for the effectiveness of ABC groups is that the experience of risk is what necessitates change in participants' lives outside of group. Group leaders must use counseling skills to help participants analyze their resistance to certain activities and decide whether or not this is an appropriate reaction (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). Eventually, group members must involve themselves in some risk taking behaviors in order to gain a feeling of competence to become their catalyst for change. Putting oneself in a risky situation causes the heightened sense of emotions and thoughts that create new cognitions and emotional reactions. ABC activities provide participants with a novel experience wherein they may feel success, without any preconceived notions. This may provide an individual with an opportunity to change their current thoughts and emotions (Gillen & Balkin 2006; Herbert, 1998; Schoel & Maizell, 2002; Wick & Peterson, 1997).

As was mentioned earlier, another key aspect of ABC groups is the focus on transfer of learning. Transfer of learning is when learning appears to be present in a setting/circumstance other than the original setting/circumstance in which the learning took place (Cormier & Hagman, 1987). It is essentially the risk taking behaviors that occur during ABC groups that allow participants to transfer their learning to their personal lives (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). This is partially due to the participant actually experiencing the new behavior, thought, or emotion versus solely discussing it with the group. It is also the group discord which causes participants to practice new and healthy conflict resolution skills which can be applied to real world experiences. Additionally, the ABC group experience may provide participants a safe opportunity to determine what triggers cause them to have certain reactions (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). Group leaders are essential to this transference process and assist participants with their insights (Glass &

Myers, 2001). Metaphors are often employed as a technique by group leaders as a way to facilitate learning from an activity. It is essential that the group leader incorporate time for processing into each group session in order to enhance transfer of learning (Glass & Shoffner, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997, Schoel & Maizell, 2002).

There are numerous benefits that may result from participating in ABC groups. Some of the psychological benefits include: (a) increased self esteem, (b) stronger ability to take risks, (c) leadership skills, (d) improved ability to solve problems, and (e) improved self analysis skills (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002). Furthermore, participants often have stronger skills to work with others such as: (a) decision making skills, (b) collaborating, (c) better ability to express themselves, (d) ability to trust, (e) effective goal setting, and (f) conflict resolution skills (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Glass & Shoffner, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997). ABC groups also foster a stronger sense of empathy for others along with a greater appreciation of differences. These skills may be especially beneficial for students to be able to function well in classrooms. Improved peer relations and reduced conflicts may be a result of students applying these skills in their classroom environments (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Moreover, the attainment of these skills may also assist students at risk of failure with improving their academic functioning (Moote & Wodarski). Because of all these benefits, ABC groups are an attractive option for school counselors.

Students at-risk, such as those with a history of abuse and neglect, may especially benefit from ABC groups. These students “generally need a developmental boost in building trust, self-image, communication skills, self-control, and appropriate relationships” (Marx, 1988, p.518). These are often the skills that ABC groups reinforce

(Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002; Glass & Shoffner, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997). ABC groups may offer the appropriate intervention for school counselors working with this population who are unsure how to address their students' needs.

Research Support for ABC Groups

Although there is a significant amount of overall research for ABC groups, studies that have been conducted in school settings are almost non-existent. Existing ABC group research supports the effectiveness and benefits of this intervention. Many studies (e.g. Beightol, Jeverston, Gray, Carter, & Gass, 2009; Conley, Caldarella & Young, 2007; Glass & Benshoff, 2002; Orren & Werner, 2007; Shirilla, 2009) focus on outdoor programs, ranging from a one day experience to week long programs. Although numerous ABC studies involve adult participants (e.g., Durr, 2009; Herbert, 1998; Ragsdale, Cox, Finn, & Eisler, 1996; Sugerman, 2000; Wolfe & Dattilo, 2006), this review will focus on those with student and adolescent populations. In addition, since there is limited ABC research conducted in schools, the following summary and critique of the literature includes a variety of settings.

Many general benefits exist, such as increased self esteem, enhanced cooperation skills, and transfer of lessons learned to other experiences (Moote & Wodarski, 1997) to justify the utilization of ABC groups. In addition, the application of ABC groups in many settings, such as camps, ropes courses, and schools (Beightol, Jeverston, Gray, Carter & Gass, 2009; Conley, Caldarella & Young, 2007; Shirilla, 2009) help to demonstrate the acceptance of this approach. One reason why ABC group experiences may be effective in school settings is that they encourage students' sense of responsibility. When practiced in the classroom, responsibility adds to the success of students (Beightol et al., 2009).

Moreover, participation in ABC groups may increase a students' sense of self esteem and desire to be involved with others (Conley et al., 2007). ABC groups may also have a positive effect on students' social skills (Shirilla, 2009). All of these attributes are essential to the success of students.

Conley, Caldarella, and Young (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of a a one day ropes course on students at risks' classroom behaviors. Prior to the study, students had been identified at risk by the middle and junior high school and were participating in special classes called Achievement Plus. All 62 students in these classes experienced the intervention. Male and Caucasian students comprised the majority of this population. All of the students were in sixth to eighth grade. The activities consisted of low elements group challenges and high elements individual challenges on ropes courses run by a private business. For instance, a zip line was utilized for a high element challenge (Conley et al., 2007). Researchers used the Classroom Environment Scale-Short Form (CES) (Moos & Trickett, 1987) as a pre and post test to analyze the effects of the intervention. This instrument helps researchers identify any changes in how students perceive their classroom along with what they would prefer to happen in the classroom. An open ended questionnaire was also administered to students as a post test that assessed how students felt the ropes course affected their relationships within their Achievement Plus class (Conley et al., 2007). Results revealed that the intervention had a significant effect on students' sense of classroom involvement. A second post test was administered one month following the intervention and revealed that the effect on students' classroom involvement remained only for the junior high group of students. Although many of the responses were favorable, there were several mixed results for the

responses to the open ended questionnaire. Approximately half of the students felt that the intervention had a positive impact on the classroom environment and some students felt that their classroom had a sense of increased cooperation. Others stated that they felt the intervention encouraged negative behaviors towards each other. In relation to classroom trust and respect, 60% of the middle school students and 54% of the junior high students experienced a positive effect.

The significant effect on student involvement is especially important since students at risk tend to retreat socially (Conley et. al, 2007). Thus, a ropes intervention may be an appropriate intervention for this specific population. Furthermore, the large number of participants adds to the strength of this study. However, the lack of diversity of participants in reference to gender and race make these results less generalizable to other populations. Also, the race and gender of the group leaders were not mentioned which would be helpful information to the reader. A strength in the research design is that it incorporated both pre and post tests, while a limitation is the lack of a control group for comparison purposes. An additional weakness in the results is the large amount of students reporting on the questionnaire that they did not feel the benefits of the intervention would transfer back to the classroom (Conley et. al, 2007).

Shirilla (2009) examined the effects of an Adventure Based program on the social skills growth of adolescents. A three year Project Adventure Incorporated Respect program in Boston middle schools and a 4-H Summer Camp program for youth in New Hampshire were studied. Two schools in the Boston area not participating in the Project Adventure program served as control groups. Students in the Project Adventure program were administered the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliott, 1990) as

a pre and post test measurement at the beginning and end of each school year (Shirilla, 2009). The youth participating in the 4-H camp completed the Social Skills Checklist (SSC) (Gass, 2005) as a pre and post test measurement at the beginning and end of the eight week camp experience. These students were also mailed the SSC in the fall as a follow up measurement. Twenty percent of the participants returned and completed the form. The Project Adventure students demonstrated significant declines in their SSRS scores, but these declines were less when compared to the control group. The 4-H camp youth had a significant increase in their SSC score along with a significant increase in their Intrapersonal subscale score (Shirilla, 2009). In contrast, there were no statistically significant gains on their Interpersonal subscale scores. However, the follow up measurements show significant declines in their SSC scores (Shirilla, 2009).

A strength of the Shirilla (2009) study is the pre and post test design with a follow up measurement. In addition, the use of control groups allowed the researcher to conduct helpful comparisons. Without the comparison to the control group, the decline of the treatment group would have yielded only negative perceptions. However, to aid the reader with generalizability, demographic information of the participants and group leaders would have been beneficial. A more detailed description of the interventions, such as the activities used would also provide more clarity. Finally, the effectiveness of this intervention is temporary since the benefits gained by the students did not prove to have sustainability over time.

Beightol, Jeverson, Gray, Carter and Gass (2009) analyzed the effects of an Adventure Based program on resilience. This program was conducted at an elementary school with 54 fifth grade students as part of an anti-bullying initiative. The belief system

grounding this study was that an increase in resiliency skills would decrease bullying issues. The intervention was ten in-school sessions which incorporated role plays and problem solving activities along with three days of students participating in a high ropes experience (Beightol et al., 2009). A mixed methods design was utilized which included quantitative results from the Anti-Bullying Initiative Survey (ABIS) (Carter & Jeverson, 2006) and qualitative results from focus groups, interviews, and program observations. The ABIS was administered as a pre and post test and also at four months following the intervention. Results from the ABIS showed students had significant increases in self esteem, goals, and aspirations (Beightol et al., 2009). Qualitative results supported this by demonstrating that students felt their strengthened goals were related to their involvement in the intervention. The qualitative data also revealed that students experienced more empathic responses. However, the qualitative data did not reveal problem solving as a pertinent theme. One notable result of the qualitative data was that participants were able to transfer their learning from the intervention to other environments.

One critique of Beightol et al's. (2009) study is that there were not enough details of the actual intervention. Similarly, the qualitative results were not discussed utilizing thick descriptions. Providing quotes from the students would have made the themes more reliable to the reader. In contrast, details were provided about the demographic information of the participants and the control group. However, the ethnicity statistics of the participants, along with any demographic information about the group leaders, were not mentioned. A propitious element of this study is the use of mixed methods (Beightol et al., 2009). The combination of the quantitative and qualitative data offered the reader a more robust analysis of the intervention. Similarly, the use of a post and follow up post

test further added to the robustness of the results. One of the most unique and beneficial results of this study is the finding that students felt that they were able to transfer their learning to other environments. Finally, it would have been helpful to analyze the effects of the aforementioned benefits on the instances of bullying in the school since decreasing those issues was a goal of this research.

Orren and Werner (2007) researched the effects of a wilderness program on adolescents. They also assessed the impact of the program based on race. One hundred forty-three adolescents participated in a one or two day wilderness program which included hiking and educational activities conducted by professional outdoor program organizations. Seventy-six adolescents composed the control group and participated in the wilderness program following the research (Orren & Werner, 2007). The racial make up of the adolescents included African Americans, Asian Americans, Caucasians, Hispanics, and Biracial individuals. Pre tests were administered to all participants approximately one week before the intervention and post tests were administered anywhere from two weeks to one month following the intervention (Orren & Werner, 2007). Instruments utilized were the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, short form (Fitts & Warren, 1996), the Children's Environmental Response Inventory (Bradley, Bunting, & Cousins, 1985) and a Supplementary Questionnaire given as a post test only that was created for this research to examine variables specific to effects of wilderness programs. For the participants in this study, there were no significant changes in relation to self concept, internalizing and externalizing behaviors, or environmental attitudes in relation to the control group (Orren & Werner, 2007). The only differences found in relation to race were that African-American participants had a lower self concept following the

intervention and that Hispanics had less environmental respect following the intervention. Themes that surfaced from the Supplementary Questionnaire Likert Scale responses were safety, support, and belonging. Themes typical to wilderness experiences such as confrontation, learning, and overcoming fears were not apparent from the answers to the Likert Scale portion of the questionnaire. However, on the open ended question portion of the Supplementary Questionnaire participants noted significant aspects of the program such as cooperation with others, being in the outdoors, and understanding the value of nature (Orren & Werner, 2007).

A strength of the Orren and Werner's (2007) study is the large number of participants which enhances its validity. In addition, the specific demographic information about the treatment and control group and the methodology aid the reader in determining generalizability. The information about the activities utilized during the intervention further assisted the reader with generalizability. Providing a copy of the Supplementary Questionnaire in the article would be beneficial to the reader. Moreover, the use of a control group and the pre and post test design (Orren & Werner, 2007) adds to the power of this study. The use of a mixed methods design also created a stronger study; however more information about the qualitative results would have been constructive to the reader. Data was adequately triangulated by having the participants fill out assessments along with the primary caregivers and the outing leaders. However, the results from the primary givers' assessments were not discussed in the results section. One limitation of this study is that the majority of the participants came from the same state (Orren & Werner, 2007) which weaken the ability to generalize the results to other populations. Interesting aspects of this study are the contrasting results from the

quantitative and qualitative data. While few significant differences were found from the quantitative data, the qualitative data reveal a different story (Orren & Werner, 2007). The results of this study prompt the idea that more research needs to be conducted to delineate the specific effects of wilderness programs on adolescents.

Moote and Wodarski's (1997) meta analysis of nineteen ABC studies found these programs provide numerous positive effects for the participants including "increased self-esteem/self concept, higher scores on physical and task-specific measures, increased use of cooperative behaviors, generalization of adventure skills to other life areas, and positive gains of psychological, social and intellectual growth" (p.150). A critique of the meta analysis design is that different kinds of ABC programs are being compared. For instance, the type of activities and the settings vary from study to study. Another inconsistent variable is the qualification, amount of, and experience of the group leaders. Some other limitations of the meta-analysis are that most of the studies did not use a control group, different measurements were utilized, and sample sizes were often unstated. Yet despite these limitations, Moote and Wodarski's work is one of the few ABC meta analyses in existence and thus offers an unequalled view of information about the general results of these interventions. At the end of the article, the authors include details about participants, measurements used, brief description of results, and other information for each study in the meta analysis. This information allows the reader to gather more information about the studies included to gauge generalizability.

Wick and Peterson (1997) found that ABC group counseling activities had a significant effect on the students' Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1984) scores. This was a six week study with forty-two fifth grade students.

Quantitative results revealed that students improved on all of the subscales of the Piers-Harris Scale except for Happiness and Satisfaction. The qualitative results from this study demonstrated that the teachers who worked with these students saw a decrease in disruptive behaviors and stronger classroom cohesiveness (Wick & Peterson). A critique of this research is that no control group was utilized. One benefit of this study is that the description of the activities are quite detailed allowing a reader to better determine generalizability.

Combs (2001) found significant positive results on at risk students' internal locus of control following participation in an eight week ABC program. Internal locus of control is a concept termed by Rotter referring to how individuals may attribute life circumstances to variables related to their self versus outside circumstances (LeFrancois, 1995). For instance, individuals with a high internal locus of control tend to maintain that their own actions have a significant effect on their life situations. In Combs' research, differences were found in reference to the students' increased internal locus of control, decreased behavior problems, improved social skills, and improved peer interactions. Qualitative results also demonstrated that the at risk students had a stronger sense of self esteem and self efficacy. A propitious aspect of this study is that multiple variables were measured frequently which assists with determining the various effects of this intervention. For example, self esteem, locus of control, and peer interactions were all measured. Results were further strengthened by adding qualitative data about the youths' interactions. This information was derived from interviews with significant adults in the students' lives, such as their group leaders and parents/guardians.

Carroll (2008) demonstrated how sixth grade at risk students' participation in a six week ABC program resulted in stronger interpersonal functioning. Although qualitative results revealed the aforementioned effect, quantitative results did not show positive effects in relation to academic functioning and self concept (Carroll, 2008). The strengths of this research are the use of quantitative and qualitative measures, inclusion of a control group, and administering both a pre and post test to measure effectiveness of the intervention.

Glass and Myers' (2001) case study of fourteen adolescent students who participated in an ABC program yielded positive results in relation to classroom cohesiveness. The researcher noted that the students had a stronger sense of belonging, increased understanding of self, and an increased sense of self worth after participating in the ABC program. One limitation of this article is that no specific measurement was discussed; it is not clear how the positive benefits were assessed by the researchers. In contrast, a propitious aspect of this study is that the intervention was conducted with all of the students in the classroom which provided an arena wherein real issues and conflicts could be confronted and perhaps resolved. One additional strength of this article is that the in depth description of the activities provides the reader an opportunity to better assess generalizability.

In the past, ABC groups have not had widespread use even though there exist ample research supporting their effectiveness (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). In summary, ABC groups may help students with school related problems by enhancing skills such as leadership, communication, trust, and problem solving. Moreover, change and growth that occurred through ABC groups tended to have a strong ability to transfer to other

settings (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002), which especially benefits students in relating to classmates and school faculty. However, more in depth and quality research is needed about how well ABC groups function, and more specifically in schools. Overall, existing research does not focus on the attributes of an ABC group leader, such as what types of individuals are leading these groups, how they are leading the groups, and what skills of the leader make these groups effective.

Although Schoel and Maizell (2002) described specific skills and techniques needed to effectively lead ABC groups, little research exists on this topic. Most current research utilizes the more general term of outdoor/adventure leadership which encompasses a broader scope of ABC interventions (Itin, 2002; Medina, 2002; Priest & Gass, 2005; Sugerman, 1999). Even though the literature is not specific to ABC, there is agreement that for outdoor/adventure leaders either university courses or professional organization training is essential for effective leadership. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of agreement in the profession as to which type of degree must be held or which specific certifications would be appropriate (Higgins & Morgan, 1999; Itin, 2002). Requiring practitioners to be proficient in both adventure activities and therapeutic skills appears to have garnered consensus with ABC/Adventure professionals (Berman & Davis-Berman, 1993; Crisp, 1998, Higgins & Morgan, 1999; Itin, 2002). Berman and Davis-Berman (1993) proposed that ABC/Adventure professionals seek training based upon an assessment of the physical and emotional risk of the activities being undertaken, the level of emotional stability of the participants being served, and the intensity of the goal of the intervention, for example recreational versus rehabilitative.

ABC/Adventure training programs have different modes of delivery, Sugerman suggested “co curricular training programs, organizational training programs, and academic degree programs” (1999, p.75) while Higgins and Morgan’s model encompassed “Outdoor Activities, Environmental Education, Personal & Social Development and Outdoor Education” (p.11). Plaut (2001) suggested that ABC/Adventure Education training programs should include components of theory, critical thinking, awareness of current research and trends, and supervisory experiences. Sugerman (1999) also noted that less than half of ABC/Adventure Education training programs offer courses in “interpersonal communication” and “teaching” (p.80). Other skills mentioned in the ABC/Adventure Education literature as important components for training programs include leadership, ethics, environmental awareness, group facilitation, debriefing, life skills knowledge and technical/safety skills (Higgins & Morgan; Schoel & Maizell, 2002; Sugerman, 1999). Warren (2002) further posits that tenets of social justice also need to be essential pieces of ABC/Adventure training programs.

Implications for Research

In order for school counselors to update their skills they must participate in professional training (Howell et al., 2007; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996; Splete & Grisdale, 1992). Even though school counseling training programs teach their students skills essential to being a school counselor, students’ needs and the world of counseling is constantly changing, thus requiring school counselors to continually attend professional trainings. Furthermore, the ASCA Code of Ethics also requires that school counselors attend professional trainings to update their skills (2010). Although it is imperative that school counselors participate in professional training, no research exists to identify the

supports and barriers they encounter when returning to work that affect their ability to implement information learned. Since school counselors are ethically bound to update their skills, research needs to be conducted to provide stakeholders with information to improve school counselors' likeliness of being able to practice information learned. Research exists which provides information about ways to improve Professional Development for educators in general, (Ediger, 1995; Ferguson, 1999; Ferguson, 2006) but information specific to school counselors is sparse.

For the purposes of this particular study, the primary researcher chose to focus on one kind of professional development, ABC, along with an overarching theme of all school counselor professional development. It appears that ABC groups are effective; however, this is based on a limited amount of current literature (Beightol, Jeverson, Gray, Carter & Gass, 2009; Conley, Caldarella & Young, 2007; Orren & Werner, 2007; Shirilla, 2009). Moote and Wodarski (1997) purport that since implementing ABC programs can require large financial obligations, more research is needed before treatment centers and schools commit to these programs. In reference to financing ABC groups in schools, more information is needed about the capability of and the effectiveness of school counselors conducting ABC groups. Thus far, research has focused on outcomes, in contrast to the effects of other group variables such as group leaders.

With respect to all professional training for school counselors, Paisley and Benshoff (1996) state, "The responsibility for meeting the subsequent professional development needs for school counselors is one that counselor educators, practitioners, and local school systems must share" (p.167). However, scant research exists concerning

this topic. Moreover, a significant intimation of Schwallie-Giddis, Anstrom, Sanchez, Sardi, and Granato's (2004), study is that school counselors' needs, in relation to professional development, should be evaluated. Yet, Splete and Grisdale (1992) noted that this topic is not often studied. Thus, the aforementioned stances give credence to the importance of this study.

Some gaps exist in the current research, one with regards to school counselors' ability to implement information learned at professional trainings and another concerning how professional training could be enhanced to better serve school counselors. Specifically related to ABC, two more gaps in current research that exist are understanding the efficacy of ABC groups in school settings and school counselors' ability to implement ABC groups.

In regards to leading ABC groups, it is unlikely that graduate school group counseling courses cover the specifics of how to conduct ABC groups. Although utilizing intensive ropes courses would require more distinct training, leading any type of ABC group effectively requires at least minimal training. Many workshops, seminars and classes across the United States are available to school counselors on how to conduct ABC groups (Wick & Peterson, 1997). One reason that training is needed for individuals conducting ABC groups is to ensure that leaders have the knowledge and skills needed to create a safe environment for risk taking (Gillen & Balkin, 2006). More specifically, training helps ensure that the group leader is able to manage physical activities, understands ways to keep participants safe, and knows how to tailor activities to the participants' needs. A well trained group leader will recognize when a certain activity is inappropriate for a participant, or the entire group. The leader may then appropriately

switch to another activity or to processing the event (Glass & Myers, 2001). Without training to acquire the skills to appropriately process an activity, an ABC group may provide enjoyment for the participants, but no growth or learning (Glass & Myers, 2001; Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Oftentimes, inexperienced group leaders focus on processing the results of the physical activity versus how the activity may be used for growth (Glass & Shoffner, 2001). Thus, in the academic environment of heightened accountability, it is obvious that school counselors should not attempt to conduct ABC groups without first obtaining the proper training. Otherwise, ABC groups may not have their intended effect and be a poor use of a school counselor's time.

A school counselor's ability to implement information learned from professional trainings, along with their ability to conduct an ABC group following participation in training, are areas that have not been researched. Current research posits that school counselors do have a desire to participate in professional training (Howell et al., 2007). Thus, it is likely that identifying ways to improve their ability to utilize the information learned would be well received by school counseling stakeholders. For instance, research has revealed that school counselors already have difficulty finding time and resources to conduct any type of group counseling (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001). Although current research examines what obstacles and supports school counselors experience in reference to conducting all types of groups, no research exists that examines their ability to practice information learned from professional training and these same factors in reference to ABC groups specifically. For instance, information is needed about whether or not school counselors are able to conduct ABC groups and how ABC training has an effect on this issue.

There is no current research which provides information as to whether or not school counselors' actually follow through with information learned from professional training or more specifically, conduct ABC groups following participation in training programs. The significance of learning more about a school counselor's experience following professional and/or ABC group training is that it would allow for school systems and school counselor educators to enhance their professional training to make it more likely that information will be utilized and to allow limited school resources to be spent wisely on programs. Specifically related to ABC training, this research will help determine if school counselors have the logistical capability to conduct ABC groups and help determine ABC groups' efficacy in the school environment.

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CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL COUNSELORS' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT SCHOOL COUNSELING ACTIVITIES FOLLOWING PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING, FOCUSING ON ADVENTURE BASED COUNSELING TRAINING

School counselors help students face a variety of difficult issues that may hinder their academic success. These issues range from child abuse, addictions, peer conflicts, low self-esteem to physical and emotional disabilities (Cox, Zhang, & Johnson, 2007; McCarthy, Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, & Guzman, 2010; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Repie, 2005). School counselors should be prepared to utilize an array of techniques to address such a wide range of student issues. One such approach available to school counselors is Adventure-Based Counseling (ABC), "Adventure-Based Counseling is a group counseling model that uses a carefully sequenced and processed series of experiential activities to elicit behavior change. ABC group members share in an engaging, effective counseling-oriented experience" (Schoell & Maizell, 2002, p.IX). This approach addresses numerous student issues such as, increasing self esteem, building trust with others, and learning healthy conflict resolution skills (Glass & Myers, 2001, Glass & Shoffner, 2001). ABC also allows students to be active participants as they learn new behaviors and grow emotionally (Schoel & Maizell, 2002). Various ABC training program opportunities exist for school counselors through university courses and county staff developments. In addition, both the school counseling literature and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) posit that school counselors should continually refresh their skills by attending professional training sessions (ASCA, 2010; Howell et al., 2007; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996; Splete & Grisdale, 1992). One example of professional training for school counselors is ABC, which will be the focus of this study

along with an overarching theme of all professional training. Thus far, studies have not assessed whether or not school counselors are able to implement information learned from professional trainings, and specifically new skills acquired at ABC trainings.

Adventure Based Counseling Literature Review

Moote and Wodarski (1997) conducted a meta-analysis of 19 ABC studies and concluded that these programs have many benefits for the participants including “increased self-esteem/self-concept, higher scores on physical and task-specific measures, increased use of cooperative behaviors, generalization of adventure skills to other life areas, and positive gains of psychological, social and intellectual growth” (p.150). The authors further posited that the greatest effect across varying types of ABC programs is an increase in self-esteem. Some limitations of this meta-analysis were that various kinds of ABC programs were being compared, and the type of activities and settings were different. The various settings included residential treatment centers, schools, ropes courses, etc. In addition, attributes of the group leaders were not consistent. For instance, group leaders’ experience levels, the amount of group leaders and group leaders’ qualifications were not constant variables. Most of the studies in the meta analysis did not use a control group. Finally, different measurements were implemented and sample sizes were unstated. However, despite these limitations, this is the one of the few ABC meta analyses in existence and thus provides unique information about the general results of these interventions. Moreover, at the end of the article, the authors included details about participants, measurements used, brief description of results, and other information for each study in the meta analysis, which allows the reader to gain a stronger understanding of the studies included.

Wick and Peterson (1997) found that ABC is effective at raising student's self esteem, as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale. Furthermore, qualitative research demonstrated that teachers who worked with these students reported a decrease in disruptive behaviors and stronger classroom cohesiveness (Wick & Peterson, 1997). The authors also mentioned that one additional benefit of ABC groups was that they allow students of varying cognitive and verbal abilities to participate and learn since the activities are action oriented versus solely verbal. A limitation of this study was that no control group was used by the authors.

ABC groups are also effective with at risk youth. In a mixed methods study, an ABC program was found to have significant positive effects on at risk students' attitudes and behaviors (Combs, 2001). Following the intervention, the at risk youth had increased internal locus of control, decreased behavior problems, improved social skills, and improved peer interactions (Combs, 2001). The term internal locus of control refers to Rotter's (LeFrancois, 1995) idea that individuals may attribute life circumstances to variables related to themselves. Qualitative results also revealed that the youth had a stronger sense of self-esteem along with increased self-efficacy. A propitious aspect of this study was that multiple variables were measured several times. Along with the quantitative results, the researchers gathered qualitative results about the youth's interactions. In another mixed methods study with at risk students in sixth grade, Carroll (2008) found that youth expressed stronger interpersonal functioning following participation in an ABC program. A limitation of this study was that the quantitative results did not show positive effects on academic functioning and self-concept (Carroll,

2008). Propitious aspects of this study included their use of a control group and the administration of both a pre and post-test to determine effectiveness of the intervention.

Glass and Myers (2001) found that ABC activities may improve classroom functioning. After adolescent students participated in an ABC program, they reported a stronger sense of belonging, increased understanding of self, and an increased sense of self-worth. The authors also mentioned the benefit of ABC activities focusing on students' strengths versus their weaknesses. One limitation of this study was that no specific measurement of results was discussed. In contrast, a strength of this study was that the intervention was conducted with all of the students in the classroom allowing for real issues and conflicts to be confronted and perhaps resolved.

Despite some limitations, researchers espouse the effectiveness of ABC programs with students. Students may benefit from these programs by having increased self-esteem, and stronger intrapersonal and interpersonal life skills (Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Wick & Peterson, 1997). However, if school counselors do not utilize the approaches after completing a program, the training will not prove beneficial for students. It is important to comprehend what issues are preventing school counselors from incorporating ABC groups into their counseling programs.

Although research about ABC training is scant, some information is present in the literature which describes training models and essential topics to be covered. Some consensus exists positing that individuals who wish to conduct ABC and/or Adventure activities should have at least a master's degree in a human service field (Itin, 2001). A number of skills and techniques fundamental to effective outdoor/adventure leadership have been identified, which include "facilitation skills, professional ethics, flexible

leadership style and experience based judgment” (Priest & Gass, 2005, p.3). Thus, before school counselors conduct ABC groups, it is imperative that they participate in some type of an ABC training program conducted by a trained professional. However, at this time no official certification for outdoor/adventure leadership exists.

The topic for this study stemmed from conversations between the primary researcher and the Key Informant, and from conversations between the primary researcher and a professor at the university where the primary researcher is a doctoral student. The primary researcher initially intended on studying the effectiveness of ABC groups conducted by school counselors in this particular county. However, the Key Informant discussed that it had recently come to her attention that few school counselors were conducting ABC counseling groups, even though many of them had participated in ABC training. In conversations with the professor about the lack of potential participants for a study on ABC group counseling effectiveness, the professor suggested investigating the phenomenon of why there were few school counselors in this particular county conducting ABC groups if a significant amount of them had attended an ABC training. Thus, the purpose of this study was devised to examine what obstacles and supports school counselors encounter after participating in Professional and ABC training which affect their ability to practice information learned. Obstacles and supports refer to both the personal and systemic issues that school counselors encounter which may either help or hinder their ability to implement information learned from Professional and ABC trainings with their students.

School counselors have difficulty finding time and resources to conduct all types of group counseling (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001). Thus, comprehending

these issues specifically related to conducting ABC groups may provide useful information to assist school counselors with putting information learned at Professional and ABC trainings into effect following participation in training sessions. Furthermore, Bore, Armstrong, and Womack (2010) are calling for qualitative research to examine school counselors' experiences in group counseling training sessions. Specifically, if school counselors are able to utilize ABC group counseling approaches, then they will be more effective at helping students cope with various issues that can impede academic success.

To understand what obstacles and supports school counselors encounter after participating in Professional and ABC training, the following research questions will be asked: (1) How do school counselors describe their professional training experiences? How do school counselors describe their Adventure Based Counseling training experience? (2) How do school counselors describe their ability to implement interventions/programs that they learned from their professional training experiences? What Adventure Based Counseling activities are school counselors, who have been trained in Adventure Based Counseling, currently using or not using in their school counseling programs? (3) What barriers and supports do school counselors identify in relation to their ability to implement interventions/programs from their professional training experiences? What reasons do these school counselors provide for either using or not using Adventure Based Counseling activities? (4) How do school counselors describe their experience(s) in using Adventure Based Counseling activities?

The significance of this study is that it will allow school systems to have a more comprehensive understanding of the supports and barriers school counselors encounter

when attempting to practice information learned at Professional and ABC trainings. More specifically, this study will also provide an understanding of the dynamics and efficacy of ABC groups and school counselors' ability to conduct them. School systems may then determine if their school counselors have the ability to utilize information learned at Professional trainings and to conduct ABC groups. Then school counseling stakeholders can decide whether limited school resources that have been or could be spent on Professional Training and ABC programs prove cost effective. Understanding this phenomenon may allow school systems to capitalize on supports and remove barriers that affect school counselors' ability to utilize information learned from Professional trainings and to implement ABC groups. In relation to ABC, since it is an intervention that reduces emotional barriers to students' academic success (Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Wick & Peterson, 1997), schools may ultimately benefit if school counselors utilize ABC groups more frequently.

Method

The theoretical framework for this study was social constructivism. Creswell purported that with a social constructivist stance the research is attempting to grasp the meaning of one person's experience (2007). The purpose of this research was to understand school counselors' experience in incorporating and sustaining information in their school counseling programs that they learned from professional trainings and also specifically from Adventure Based Counseling (ABC) trainings. A social constructivist stance maintains that it is the individual's perspective that is the key to understanding issues and/or situations. In reference to this research, it was important to understand what personal concerns school counselors may have been experiencing that affect their

utilization of ABC activities. This was ascertained by gaining an understanding of the school counselors' inner perspective through in-depth individual interviews with the primary researcher. Social constructivism posits that the parameters of any given situation rely on the effects of cultural and historical norms (Creswell, 2007). This stance helps one to understand the system that school counselors function in and the effects of that system on the utilization of ABC activities. In order to gain this understanding, social constructivism emphasizes the use of open-ended questions (Creswell, 2007). This requires the researcher(s) not to make presumptions about causes before gathering data. However, a social constructivist open-ended stance does not dismiss the researcher from the responsibility of being aware of his/her own biases and distinct role in the research process (Creswell, 2007). This stance framed the primary researcher's attempt to understand her own attitudes based on her own experiences in ABC training and conducting of ABC activities. It was also important to understand how these experiences may have affected the primary researcher's role in the process and served as a reminder to remain ethical throughout the entire process.

The qualitative tradition for this study was phenomenology. The phenomenological goal of the research was to understand the shared experience of the participants (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the phenomenon was the experiences of school counselors incorporating professional development training with a specific focus on ABC activities into their programs following their participation in training sessions, the main focus was to comprehend "What" participants experienced and "How" they experienced it. If school counselors were going to utilize techniques they learned in training sessions, then it was important to engage school counselors to discover what

aided or hindered the implementation of those newly acquired skills. This research was conducted in an interpretive style whereby the research team analyzed the data and then communicated what they perceived to be the main themes emerging from the data (Creswell, 2007).

Participants

Criterion sampling is a method that insures that all of the participants have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2007) and was used to identify and recruit participants for this study. All of the participants in this study completed some type of ABC training and were currently working as a school counselor. There were a total of 12 participants in this study including one key informant. LeCompte et al. (1999) stated that key informants are important to help researchers, "...gain access to communities, key sources of information, and their own families and personal networks." (p.86). The key informant was the county director of school counseling. The key informant is a former school counselor who has been the director of this particular large suburban county counseling program for four years. She is a white female in her early forties who has a masters and specialist degree in school counseling. She was an elementary school counselor for seven years and a high school counselor for three years.

Eight participants were in their forties or fifties; three were in their thirties, and one was in her twenties. There were 11 female participants and one male participant. 10 participants identified themselves as Caucasian, one participant identified as African-American and the other participant as Hispanic/Caucasian. Five of the participants had worked 10 or fewer years as a school counselor, five worked between 11 and 20 years, and two worked over 20 years. Three of the participants took the ABC training as a

course for a graduate degree, four of the participants took the ABC training conducted by a private organization at an outdoor facility, and the other five were trained by the university professor on the school county premises. Both the graduate course and school county ABC trainings were led by the same professor. Nine participants went through the training during the past 10 years; three of the participants went through the ABC training over 20 years ago. There were five elementary school counselor participants, two middle school counselor participants and two high school counselor participants. All but two of the participants worked full time, the other two worked part time. All participants had certifications as school counselors, and some had other certifications/licensures such as social work, marriage and family, and licensed professional counselor.

Procedure

The key informant was the first to be interviewed. An informed consent was signed by the key informant and a copy given to her at the time of the interview. Any questions and/or concerns about the informed consent were discussed prior to asking any official interview questions. The session was audio taped to assist with accuracy when later transcribed.

There are approximately 75 school counselors in this county who have completed a county sponsored staff development ABC training. The particular county in which participants work provided a three day ABC training coordinated by the county counseling office to interested school counselors approximately three times, over a five year period. (School counselors may only participate in the training one time.) The three day trainings were led by the same university professor who specializes in ABC. More counselors completed this training; however, the key informant stated that approximately

half of them no longer work for the county. In addition, the key informant had also completed the three day ABC training, thus part of her interview was analyzed as a regular participant. The county counseling office also offered a two hour ABC training, led by the same professor, as part of an elementary counselor staff development day. Other participants in this study went through ABC training coordinated by the county approximately 15 years ago, they were led by private ABC agencies on high ropes courses. Some participants took university ABC courses as part of their graduate programs.

For this study, participants were recruited through the county e-mail system (Appendix A). The primary researcher solicited school counselors who have completed not only a county ABC staff development, but any type of ABC training and who were interested in participating in a study. For those who responded to the e-mail, the primary researcher e-mailed back more specific information concerning the study. The primary researcher e-mailed potential participants and asked if they were willing to be interviewed. For those who were willing, interviews were conducted during non school hours at places of convenience for the interviewees. For instance, at their school office, coffee shops, or at their private home. Informed consents (Appendix B) were signed by each participant and a copy given to them at the time of the interview. Any questions and/or concerns about the informed consent were discussed prior to asking any research related interview questions. All sessions were audio taped to assist with accuracy when transcribed. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were asked if they would be willing to answer follow up interview questions over the phone and/or review initial themes of the data. This data was sent to them as an attachment through e-mail. Their

responses were requested either over the phone or through e-mail, whichever was the preference of the participant.

Data Sources

Individual interview. Semistructured interviewing was utilized as the style for all of the aforementioned interviews. Semistructured interviewing is defined by Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte (1999) as "...predetermined questions related to domains of interest, administered to a representative sample of respondents to confirm study domains, and identify factors, variables, and items or attributes of variables for analysis or use in a survey" (p. 149). This style of interview was appropriate for this study since Schensul et al. (1999) proposed that semistructured interviews are best suited to studies attempting to understand a phenomena as compared to a grounded theory study wherein a theory is being tested. In the latter, more information is already known thus allowing for a different style of interview. In this study, the semistructured style allowed for the interviewee's information to help formulate the direction of the interview. For instance, the interviewer had a set of open ended questions to lead the discussions with the interviewees, but was open to new information that arose during the interview. The interviewer chose to add new questions as each interview progressed based on the information being provided by the interviewee (Schensul et al., 1999).

Demographic information. At the time of the interview, participants were asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire (Appendix C). Information obtained included (a) gender, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) age, (d) how long worked as a school counselor, (e) how long ago they participated in ABC training, (f) what type of ABC training they participated in, (g) elementary, middle or high school counselor, (h) what grades do they

work with, (i) general job description, (j) work part time or full time, and (k) type of licensure/certification.

Reflexive journal. In addition, the primary researcher maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process to record her thoughts and reactions to the evolving study.

Research Team

At the time of the study, the primary researcher was a 40 year old Caucasian female who has worked 14 years as a school counselor. The primary researcher currently works as a part time elementary school counselor and also went through the county staff development ABC training approximately eight years ago, along with a university ABC class approximately five years ago.

Five school counseling recent graduates comprised the research team. There were four female members and one male member. Two members were African American and three members were Caucasian. Three of the research team members worked in the county in which participants worked. One of those was working as a part time school counselor and part time teacher and another as a full time special education teacher. During the course of the research, one of the research team members began working as a middle school counselor in this county. Another began working as an elementary school counselor in a nearby county. The other research team member was a long term school counseling substitute in a nearby county. None of the research team members had attended any type of ABC training and all graduated with their Masters in School Counseling from the same university where the primary researcher is a doctoral student.

A crucial aspect of phenomenology involves suspending one's own judgment and preconceived notions in order to gain the most honest description of a participant's experience. This is referred to as *epoche* or bracketing and is a process whereby researchers attempt to raise awareness about their presumptions of the researched topic in order to minimize bias (Brown, Sorrell, McClaren, & Creswell, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Groenwald, 2004; Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell, 2007). Maso (2001) refers to bracketing as researchers' attempts to put aside their prior notions and beliefs about what is being studied in order to view the issue in a more objective manner.

The research team met prior to analyzing any data to discuss any "preconceived notions, assumptions, and knowledge of the experience under consideration" (Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell, 2007, p. 341). The process of *epoche*/bracketing was a constant goal of the research team and was attuned to by members of the team continually discussing possible bias throughout the entire research process. This was conducted with the awareness that the research team's personal views and perspectives had an effect on data analysis

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research can be viewed as "a progression, not a stage; an ongoing process, not a one-time event" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 111 as in Portman, 2002). This process was aligned with Creswell's (2007) four step process of putting the data in order, reviewing the data, looking for consistent codes and themes, and finally writing the information utilizing detailed descriptions.

The first step is putting the data in order. All of the interviews were transcribed by the research team and kept on each member's home computer. To maintain participants'

confidentiality, transcripts were marked by a code, known only by the primary researcher, with no other identifiable participant information. The transcripts were either printed and a copy given to each member of the research team or sent as an e-mail attachment with no identifiable information. After transcripts were reviewed, potential themes were discussed and a code book was created. All data were stored in locked file cabinets in each of the research team member's home. All of the tapes were returned to primary researcher and stored in a locked cabinet in her home.

After organizing the data, the second step is to review the transcripts. As Creswell (2007) recommended, the research team read the transcripts in full, while also making notes in the margins, before attempting to categorize and create themes. This allowed for the research team to "...get a sense of the interview as a whole before breaking it into parts" (Creswell, 2007, p.150). The process of horizontalization occurred by the research team identifying the most significant statements from the transcripts. Following this, any overlapping statements were discarded (Brown et al., 2006; Iwamoto et al., 2007).

The third step is to look for consistent codes and themes. The significant statements were delineated by their essence or meaning and clustered into themes based on similarities. One goal during this phase was to be respectful to the meaning inherent in each statement by not assuming what a participant's words imply, but conveying them literally. The research team took extra care to check each other about whether or not extra interpretations were being made. The themes were then deconstructed and separated into textural and structural descriptions. Creswell (2007) posited that textural descriptions assist with understanding what a participant experiences and a structural description describes how it is experienced. In addition, the textural and structural descriptions were

conjoined to delineate a description of the essence of the participant's experience. This description, called the essential structure, gives the reader an overall view of the meaning from the data (Creswell, 2007; Iwamoto, et al., 2007). According to Polkinghorne (1989), the essential structure should allow the reader to sense that "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (p. 46 as in Creswell, 2007). Following this phase, the research team reviewed emerging patterns in the data by incorporating the constant comparative method (Portman, 2002). This is when the research team continuously checked with each other the interpreted meanings of codes and notes until consistency was found among stated themes. Each transcript was analyzed line by line to assure that the inherent meaning matched a theme in the code book. During each research team meeting, members would review their coding with each other to insure consistency and assure group consensus (100% agreement) was achieved. The first few transcripts were analyzed and coded by all research team members, the proceeding transcripts were coded by at least three members.

Initially, the research team searched for as many statements as possible from the data which either supported or created a theme. Eventually, saturation of data was achieved when no new information surfaced that deepened the understanding of each theme (Creswell, 2007). For instance, more data from the interviews was not providing any new information. The research team had group consensus that this saturation point in the data was reached after the 12th interview. At that point, no new data from participants were solicited.

This entire process was recursive whereby interviews were promptly coded and the data gathered used to help determine questions for each following interview. The

research team met each time the primary researcher conducted two interviews. All of the interviews were transcribed verbatim by the research team. For the first four interviews, prior to each meeting, all research team members read each transcription and highlighted important and significant statements related to the research questions. After these interviews, a preliminary code book was created by the research team to assist with coding transcripts. Prior to each subsequent meeting, each research team member coded the recent interviews according to the code book. During each meeting the group would reach consensus about how interviews were coded by each individual and discuss any inconsistencies. Before the final meeting, all transcripts were recoded by the research team to ensure the final code book accurately represented the data.

Interviews were generally not conducted until the research team analyzed and reached consensus on how significant statements were coded. Only once did the primary researcher interview more than two participants before having a group meeting. The research team decided to add and refine a few interview questions for the second six interviews in order to fill in gaps in the data. Consistency of themes developed by the research team was reviewed through member checking and peer debriefing. The details of these procedures will now be explained.

Member checking is when the researcher brings information about the themes and codes back to the participants to have them assist with determining accurate representation of the data (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 2001). This process allows participants to help validate presented information along with showing respect for participants by offering them an opportunity to provide input about how they are being represented. This approach demonstrates ethical concern for participants' dignity and

strengthens the credibility of the study. (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 2001). This was conducted after coding of the data was complete and the themes had been identified. All participants were e-mailed the themes in the form of a Code Book, which included definitions for each code, and a visual representation chart. No suggested changes to the code book were made by any participant.

Peer debriefing refers to the primary researcher conversing about the research process with a professional colleague (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 2001). The topics of these conversations may range from logistical concerns to ethical issues to issues with data analysis. The peer in this case is able to offer another viewpoint along with helpful suggestions (Creswell, 2007; Schwandt, 2001). In this study, the peer chosen was a professor in the field of Counseling in the university where the primary researcher is currently a student. The primary researcher and peer debriefer conversed five times during the time of this study.

The final phase of data analysis, writing of the results, was conducted by the primary researcher. However, the peer debriefer continually reviewed the results to check for consistency. Thick descriptions were utilized to enhance the reader's ability to grasp the participants' experience (Schwandt, 2001). Meaningful quotes from the participants were incorporated into the results section to help illuminate the essence of the themes.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness is referred to as "that quality of an investigation (and its findings) that made it noteworthy to audiences" (Schwandt, 2001, p.258). Lincoln and Guba propose four guidelines which researchers can utilize to enhance trustworthiness (Schwandt, 2001). The first of these four guidelines is

credibility, which is ensuring that the results are aligned with the meaning intended by the participants. In this research, one way this was promoted was by member checking with the participants. Member checking is when participants are asked to review themes to ensure that they are a fair representation of their viewpoints (Creswell, 2007; Groenwald, 2004). The themes were e-mailed to all participants and then participants could e-mail their feedback back to the primary researcher or have a phone conversation. Again, no changes were suggested by participants. In addition, credibility may have been enhanced since the primary researcher is also a school counselor and the other research team members are recent graduates of a master's in school counseling program, some of whom are practicing school counselors. This may have allowed the primary researcher and research team to have a more profound understanding of the school counseling information the participants described.

The second of these four guidelines is transferability which refers to the issue of offering sufficient detail in the report to allow readers to determine whether or not the information is also pertinent in their own situation (Schwandt, 2001). This was heightened by utilizing thick descriptions throughout the writing of the research results. Thick description is when the phenomenon being studied is described and written in detail, including significant and extensive quotes which allow the reader to decide about the transferability of the information. The more details a reader has about a phenomenon, the more likely they are to be able to determine if the results would be applicable to their own situation (Creswell, 2007). Since thick descriptions still allow for the interpretive effect of the author (Schwandt, 2001), the process of epoche/bracketing was utilized to diminish this effect.

The third guideline is dependability which refers to the research process and ensuring that it is “logical, traceable, and documented” (Schwandt, 2001, p.258).

Auditing is often the method utilized to deepen dependability. In this research, the audit trail included: (a) transcriptions, (b) the actual recorded tapes, (c) cooked transcripts, (d) lists of codes and abbreviations, (e) audit log with dates of research events, and (f) reflexive journal kept by the primary researcher. This audit trail allowed for the research team to engage in intensive peer debriefing and assist with member checking. The audit trail was used to assist the primary researcher in organization of materials and furthering deep analysis. In addition, the audit trail provided an outside consultant with the data to audit this research. Creswell (2007) purported that an auditor should have no ties to the research, be able to scrutinize the entire research process, and help determine accuracy of the results. In essence, the auditor’s role is to gauge the validity of the research. For this study, a school counseling professor who was not a part of this study, served in the role as auditor. The auditor was a Caucasian female professor in her early sixties who worked in the same university where the primary researcher is enrolled as a doctoral student. The auditor met with the primary researcher at the termination of the research phase and reviewed the audit trail. The auditor determined that the research team satisfied the procedure set forth in the primary researcher’s timeline and that the process was conducted with limited bias.

The fourth guideline is confirmability which is assuring that the data is presented in a logical manner that allows the reader to verify the themes created by the author (Schwandt, 2001). This was attuned to by assuring that the discussion and conclusion portions of the research paper link their concepts to the existing data. Another way this

was enhanced was by providing thick descriptions which enable the reader to determine if the themes match the participants' quotes. Confirmability was also promoted by member checking with the participants and discussing confirmability with the peer debriefer and auditor.

Results

The original research questions were to determine what school counselors were actually implementing in their school counseling programs following participation in training, and then understanding what supports and barriers they encountered upon implementation. This was inclusive of the ABC training and implementation. The Results section is separated into two sections, the Textural responses from participants, which delineate "What" happened, and the Structural responses, which delineate "How" it was experienced. The final section is Recommendations from Participants, which consists of suggestions about how school counselors may increase utilization of information learned from trainings. In each section, responses related to general training will be discussed along with responses specific to ABC.

Textural Responses

The Textural section helped answer the following research questions:

- How do school counselors describe their professional training experiences?
 - How do school counselors describe their Adventure Based Counseling training experience?

- How do school counselors describe their ability to implement interventions/programs that they learned from their professional training experiences?
 - What Adventure Based Counseling activities are school counselors, who have been trained in Adventure Based Counseling, currently using or not using in their school counseling programs?

The Textural section was divided into two main themes, participants' experiences in County Professional Learning and in Professional Training (See Figure 1).

County professional learning. County Professional Learning is described as any staff development training provided and coordinated by the county. This incorporates training that was either conducted by the county or local school, or financed and coordinated by the county or local school. For instance, in reference to County Professional Learning, one elementary school counselor participant mentioned what topics are presented at the counselor staff developments, "...you know maybe somebody might come in from [name of college] or something like that and do presentations of various different topics. Whether it was from medication for children, or ADHD or adventure..." County Professional Learning was divided into two sub themes, Key Informant Perception and School Counselor Perception. The Key Informant Perception will be discussed first, followed by the School Counselor Perception.

Key informant perception. The Key Informant's Perception provided helpful background information for this study. This information was divided into Professional Learning in the County and the School Counselor Role in the County. Professional

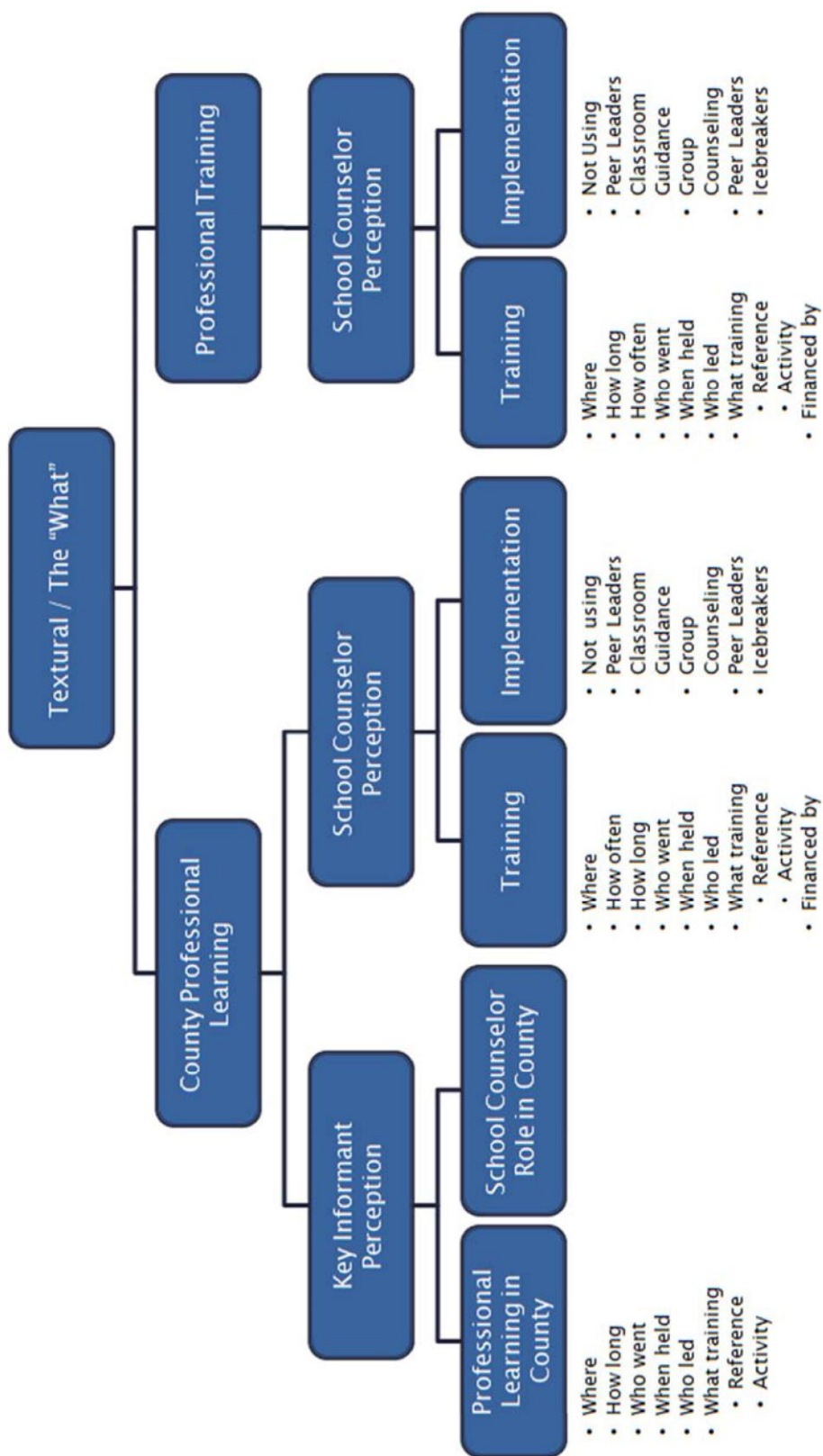


Figure 1. Textural Chart.

Learning in the County had logistical sub categories such as Where training occurred, Who went to training, When training was held, etc. With regards to the background information of Professional Learning in the County, one aspect the Key Informant commented on was the ability to meet consistently. She shared, “We are very fortunate that we do get to meet with our counselors 5 times a year. And we do day long trainings in addition to summer staff developments.” The Key Informant also discussed why the county staff development is important for school counselors, how it is assessed, and how it is coordinated:

...a lot of the staff development that’s offered at the school level does not pertain directly to our job. So we have an opportunity to offer staff development that the counselors can use, the topics and the activities that we do, then they apply directly to their work. And so we do, we also just don’t pick our staff development willy nilly, we actually do a survey every year. We assess our actual staff development after each one, so we get feedback about that, so we can make changes during the year. But then we do an end of the year survey, it’s also kind of a needs assessment, like areas that they’re seeing of concern you know, with kids. So our steering committees, elementary, middle and high, we have one for each, they meet every summer for three, this year it was three days where we talk about the best practices for adult learning.

With relation to What topics were covered during these staff developments, the Key Informant stated that they “...did one on different medications, and we have had ethics training...”, and “...from self harm, internet safety, we have done, we try to do a lot of best practice sharing...”. As mentioned above, topics for staff development are focused on information school counselors are unlikely to receive at local school staff developments. These topics are based on feedback provided by the county’s school counselors about what issues they are currently addressing with their students. According to the Key Informant, many staff developments include a portion of collaborating and consulting among school counseling colleagues in order to impart practical information.

The Key Informant also noted a shift in how topics are presented, “So we do fewer topics, better quality, and more in depth.” The style shift also includes a more experiential approach to staff development, “Because they’re actively participating in it. They own the learning.” And due to recent budget constraints, along with a stronger push for educator accountability, the Key Informant summarized her departments’ stance on staff development, “Which is another reason why it can’t be just fluffy, it has to be, it has to be substantial.”

The Key Informant was also able to provide background information pertaining to one of the ABC staff developments offered by the county office of counseling, “...it was offered in the summer, it was a 5 day training...” and

I want to say it was either 8:30-3:30 or 9:00-4:00 something like that. We met in school and it was Dr. [Name of instructor], was our instructor, I think he was the only one who has ever done that, in [Name of county] he’s always been the instructor. And so we would go through an activity and then he would teach us how to process it.

The Key Informant noted that the ABC training is very popular with school counselors in this county, she relayed that “It is actually still the most requested one [Training].” And also said “I mean it, it was unbelievable, everybody wanted to be in it because they said not only is it fun, but it was practical, and it was applicable...”

The primary researcher also solicited information about the general role of school counselors in this particular county from the Key Informant. This explanation was desired to help provide the context for this study about whether or not information learned in trainings could be applicable to the school counselors’ job description. Some of the job roles the Key Informant mentioned include, “...we are expected to do small groups, we are expected to do classroom guidance...”, “...we are expected to do the

individual counseling, parent programs, very often teacher staff development...”, and “parent consultation, teacher consultation, community consultation...”

School counselor perception. This subtheme constituted the school counselors’ experiences with any County Professional Learning. For example, one elementary school counselor participant recounted some of her experiences:

and [Name of county] has the monthly staff developments that we [School Counselors] usually have like once a month, approximately once a month, where we do some kind of staff development, whether it’s on, you know, guidance lessons, groups, something to do with our practice and then I’ve also been to some staff developments in [Name of county] in the summer, courses. I did one like two three summers ago that was like a three day course on different you know guidance techniques, groups.

School Counselor Perception of County Professional Learning was divided into the subthemes of Training and Implementation. Training was again defined as the logistical categories as mentioned earlier. Implementation was defined as what school counselors are able to come back from training and put into practice in their school counseling programs.

Training. Some details of a staff development training were summarized by an elementary school counselor participant:

. . . and at the county they had a staff development every summer about how to teach [Name of personality assessment program], I remember that. I remember going to training at the county about study skills, you know, just specific to how to run a study skills group . . .

A middle school counselor participant relayed some of her staff development experiences, “I do trainings through the counseling department for the school, so they might do trainings on, I think the latest one we had was from mental health with children and current medications.”

Implementation. With regard to the question of what school counselors learned from County Professional Learning that they are able to Implement in their programs, an elementary school counselor participant commented on a trauma based training she attended:

It was, where children are, they're, it was more based on their perception of how a traumatic event, how it appeared to them. Not so much as what actually happened. And then they would, of what they were thinking happened, and then they draw a picture of that and then they process that information. And then they would change the picture a little bit and you continued like that. So, to help them work through their traumatic event. So that was something that I used that was county based.

A different elementary school counselor participant described another way in which she utilizes information learned from County Professional Learning:

OK, there is, I have certainly implemented some things into my guidance lessons that I learned from a counselor, I went to one of her, she kind of showed a way to set up her [Guidance] lessons so that they were consistent. She was so, yeah, so she showed some tricks and techniques for starting your class off, important things to do in kindergarten that get their attention, like classroom management kind of thing. And she is, I certainly used some lessons that she gave us. So I would probably say that I have taken more back of the county professional development.

Although 10 participants reported applying much of the information they learned in County Professional Learning, the category of Not Using also surfaced for three participants. A high school counselor participant relayed that she does not always implement information learned from County Professional Learning, "There's been some staff development that was just sort of out there that I do not use as much." All 12 participants communicated that the County Professional Learning information they are implementing in their school counseling programs are applied most often to their work with either classroom guidance, small group counseling, icebreakers or Peer Leaders.

Professional training.

School counselor perception. Professional Training refers to any professional learning available to school counselors not related to the school system. Professional Training was not divided into two sub themes since the Key Informant does not have background information about non county trainings. Thus, only School Counselor Perception is applicable for this theme. A high school counselor participant, gave this example of Professional Trainings she attended, “Some statewide and also some regional, for working with the at-risk students and also some of the resources that are out there in the state.”

This main theme is divided into two themes of Training and Implementation. Training is again related to the logistical variables of the training, such as Where the training occurred, What topic was covered, and How Long the training lasted. Implementation again refers to the ability to perform information learned at Professional Training.

Training. There were diverse Professional Training experiences for participants. One elementary school counselor participant described her Professional Training experiences:

Every year I try to go to at least two or three seminars myself. I either go to play therapy or I go to something on ethics, how to work an RTI [Response to Intervention], how to do work with non-motivated students or something.

An elementary school counselor participant addressed both themes of attending a Professional Training and then how she Implemented the information:

And one of my most recent ones at the state conference was on anxiety that was excellent and I just finished or am finishing up a perfectionism/anxiety group at school and I’ve used so many of their materials and that was just fantastic, they just gave us different ideas for

resources, so, you know, you go and you pull from that and you use this book that you already had and just some different ways to teach...

Financing for both Professional Training and County Professional Learning surfaced as a logistical category in the data, which was discussed by nine participants. One elementary school counselor participant relayed her professional training experiences and also explained how finances were affecting her ability to attend future professional trainings:

Yes, there was one I went to at [Name of university] on working with the Hispanic population that was about three years ago. It was a one day course. There's... Ok, I would go to [Name of conference], the [Name of conference]. I did that almost every year when I was full time. I didn't go the past two years because of budget constraints and stuff like that. I couldn't go to as many conferences, but those are the main ones.

Seven participants in this study communicated that budget constraints caused school counselors to have to pay for most professional training themselves, which translated into attending fewer professional training opportunities. In relation to Professional Training, the Financed By theme that emerged was one where the county paid school counselors to attend non school/county trainings with the expectation that the information learned would be incorporated into their school counseling programs. An example shared by a middle school counselor participant, "The county paid to attend, and then you had to implement it that year."

Implementation. Similar to County Professional Learning Implementation, all 12 participants communicated that the Professional Training information they implemented in their school counseling programs were applied most often to their work with either classroom guidance, small group counseling, icebreakers, or Peer Leaders. For instance, one elementary school counselor participant discussed how she implemented information she learned from Professional Trainings, "So if I hear about a new book or a new activity

I usually put those into play. Probably more small groups kind of stuff I can put into play pretty easily.” Similar to the theme of Not Using in relation to County Professional Learning, nine participants relayed how they were not always implementing what they learned from Professional Training. For example, one middle school counselor participant described her experience, “I do remember a workshop writing for professional journals. It was great information, but did I ever have time to put it to use? No.”

In summary, the Textural themes revealed that the participants experienced multiple County Professional Learning and Professional Training sessions that focused on a diversity of topics. Participants discussed logistics of these trainings along with whether or not they were implementing information learned. The next section will review how participants viewed the aforementioned experiences.

Structural Responses

The structural section helped answer the following research questions:

- What barriers and supports do school counselors identify in relation to their ability to implement interventions/programs from their professional training experiences?
 - What reasons do these school counselors provide for either using or not using Adventure Based Counseling activities?
 - How do school counselors describe their experience(s) in using Adventure Based Counseling activities?

This section focuses on what participants’ opinions were about the trainings and what they see as the barriers and supports to their ability to implement information learned. This was divided into two major themes, Practice Factors and Reaction to

Training. Practice Factors refers to the variables affecting participants' ability to implement the information learned during training to their professional settings. Reaction to Training relates to the participants' experiences during the actual training. Each of these themes was either related to general County Professional Learning/Professional Training or specific to ABC (See Figure 2).

Practice factors. The theme of Practice Factors was defined as the ability to implement what was learned in training. One middle school counselor commented on factors affecting her utilization of information from training, "Just hours in a day, sometimes the logistics of it." This theme was divided into the subthemes of Logistics and Impact.

Logistics. The theme of Logistics was defined as details related to the implementation of information learned during the training. All 12 participants commented on this theme. One elementary school counselor participant discussed Logistics in relation to preparing an ABC classroom guidance lesson, "I don't have anything to cut out, I don't have anything to copy, you know, it's wonderful, I love it."

For each subtheme under Logistics, general and ABC training responses from participants will be elaborated upon. The subthemes categorized under Logistics are Time, Space, and Material Availability. Time is defined as the amount of time needed to implement information learned from training, which was discussed by all 12 participants. For instance, Time surfaced as a theme in relation to a trauma training that one elementary school counselor participant attended, "I've been able to take that back with me and use it in the school because it's been quick and more something I could use short term." All 12 school counselor participants mentioned Time as a potential barrier. A

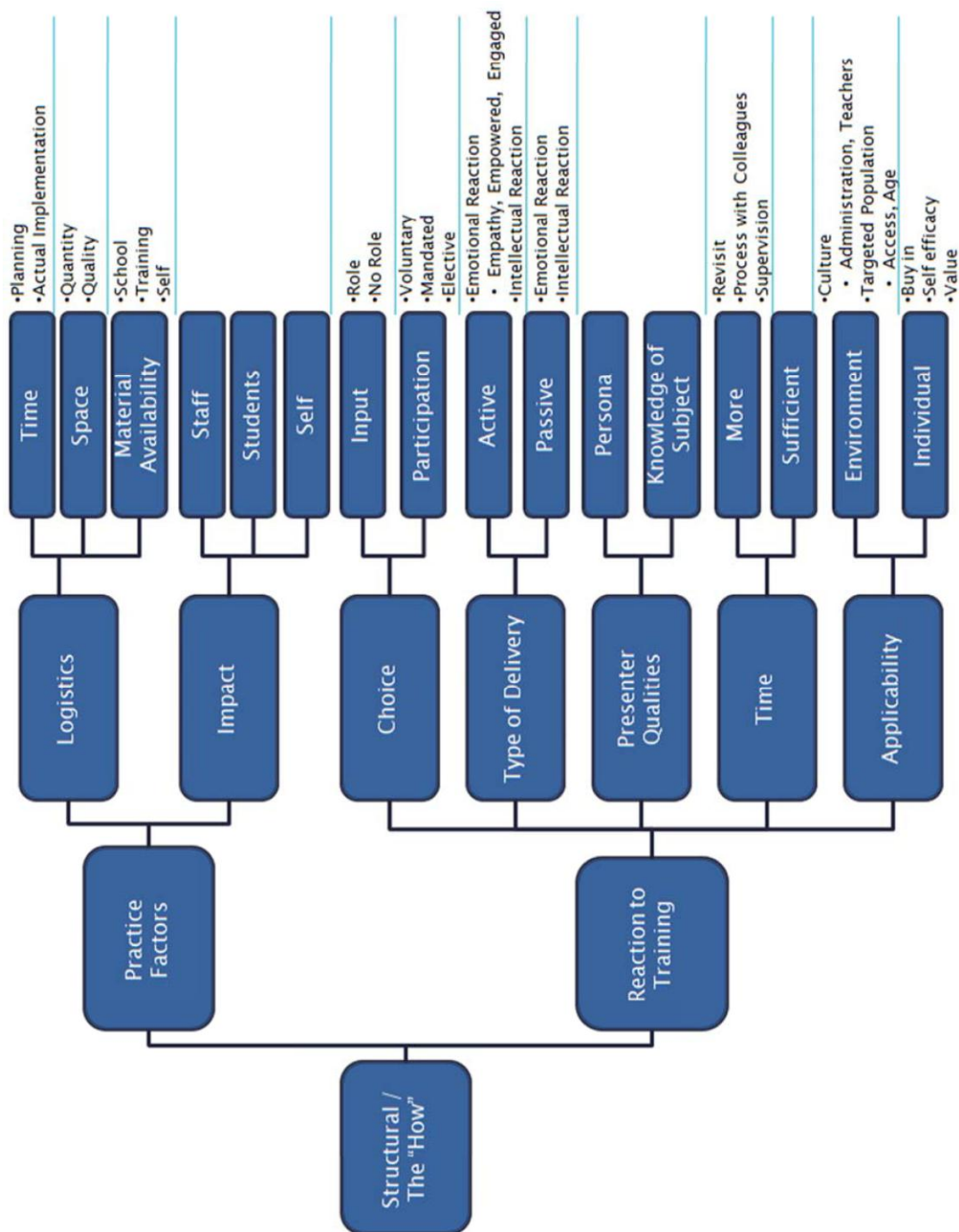


Figure 2. Structural Chart.

middle school counselor participant discussed time as a barrier when questioned about what supports or prevents him from implementing information learned at general trainings, “Time, scheduling, how I’m going to fit it all in.” One middle school counselor

participant reflected on how Time impacted her inability to implement ABC activities, “And I would just tend to go, honestly to the fast food alternative that maybe is not as good in the long run but it sure was quick and easy.” Another middle school counselor shared concerns about Time constraints in relation to utilizing ABC activities when she expressed, “Like when you have 20 minutes, you don’t really get to do a lot of adventure.” In contrast, one participant found ABC a Time saver when utilizing it for guidance lessons, “Oh my gosh, it is so much less planning. Once I get my year planned out, I can look at my lesson on Friday, and see what I need, and go get it, and put it in a pile, and it’s ready to go.”

The theme of Time was divided into two more subcategories, Planning and Actual Implementation. Planning is defined as time to design the process used for implementation of information learned during training. Actual Implementation is defined as time for performing the information learned during training. With respect to Planning, one high school counselor participant noted how Time to Plan is an essential piece to implementing ABC, “I need to stop, close my door, and get organized to allow myself some time to ponder and to plan. And so that would be the first thing that would have to happen.” In reference to making sure there is enough Time to Implement an ABC group effectively, one elementary school counselor participant relayed her concerns, “But the processing of the information became very important because they didn’t, if you skip that part, if you get cut on time and you’re skipping any of that, then they’re not carrying it.”

Another sub theme under Logistics is Space, which was mentioned by all 12 participants. Space was further delineated into Quantity and Quality of Space. Quantity was defined as access to a large enough room and Quality relating to the room being

conducive to performing the activity. With respect to the Quantity of space, one elementary school counselor participant stated how this issue affects her ability to implement ABC activities, “Time, space, because I feel like when you are doing an adventure based group, I mean you almost have to get outside and do things.” A middle school counselor participant described how the Quality of indoor spaces may still not be appropriate for ABC activities, “I’ve done toss and name [ABC activity] in my office, but that can be a little dicey with lamps and things.” All 12 participants also communicated that finding a suitable space, in relation to both Quality and Quantity, to perform ABC activities was often a barrier.

The final theme under Logistics was Material Availability, which was commented on by all 12 participants. This theme was further divided into User Friendliness and Access. User Friendliness was defined as the ease of understanding and using materials. Access was defined as a school counselor’s ability to procure the material(s) needed. One high school counselor participant commented about her ability to Access ABC materials:

[Name of instructor] was really good at saying you can get cheap materials, here, here, here, and here or you can make your own material doing this, this, this and this. You know, he always said you do not have to spend a lot of money to do this stuff. And I sort of gathered my own materials, which I like, because I’m going to take these materials with me if I ever leave this school. So I can use them other places, but materials would have been limiting because no one would give me money to buy some rope.

Additionally, six participants had concerns about their ability to utilize materials, this User Friendly category was commented on by a middle school counselor participant, “...if I feel like the materials aren’t as snazzy because sometimes you can beef things up, but sometimes things just don’t jive with me.” The same participant also talked about the User Friendly theme as it related to time when she explained:

...if it's something that I have to get a lot of things before or even if I have to prepare a lot—you know, like get little puzzle pieces cause I've done that in the past when I was younger. And it's not worth it to me to try to put all that together. I mean, I'm going 90 to nothing, so I want to be able to go, "Oh, it's classroom guidance!" You know, go.

Impact. The theme of Impact was described as the effects of using the information learned during training. These effects were delineated by all 12 participants as having Impact on Staff, Students, or Self. One middle school counselor participant expressed these views about the Impact of using ABC with Students:

Yeah, I wouldn't use it if I didn't think it was effective. Yeah, it's fun and there's some things that we do for fun. But, I think there's a major, I think that, it's effective. I do. I do. First, for some more than others. But, I've seen even some of the EBD [Emotional Behavior Disorder] students learn what it takes to get the job done. And, actually help others, not just themselves, but to actually help others to accomplish their goals to complete the task. So, it takes them helping, they learn how to help others get to where they needed to go.

An elementary school counselor participant discussed the Impact she witnessed when conducting an ABC group with male Students in elementary school:

I'm thinking of how they learned to sometimes, to take their anger and instead of exploding with that, but they took their anger and they were able to then think about, you know like, I'm, because of how we had processed it before. You know, OK, you know you got mad when you couldn't accomplish that. Or you got mad at your friend because they didn't seem to be helping out the group, or whatever. Then they, you know, I felt like they could...Using their anger to generate energy instead of hurt somebody or hurt themselves.

Reaction to training. As mentioned earlier, the other major theme is Reaction to Training. The theme of Reaction to Training is exemplified by this statement from a middle school counselor participant, "I liked the challenges. I liked working as a group to obtain a goal that sometimes you feel like you can't achieve." Reaction to Training has five subthemes of Choice, Type of Delivery, Presenter Qualities, Time, and Applicability which will now be explained.

Choice. Choice is characterized as the ability to choose a professional training experience. This theme was further divided into the sub categories of Input and Participation. Input was defined as either having a Role, or No Role in choosing the topic or format of a training. Participation in professional training was designated as either being Voluntary, Mandated, or Elective. Voluntary meant the counselor themselves chose to attend a training. Elective meant the counselor was required to attend a training by their school and/or county but had choice(s) as to which session(s) to attend. A middle school counselor participant gave an example of this, “Like a little mini conference, that’s here just among our county counselors and you can do some pick and choose lots of times of the topics you want to go to.” The mandatory theme was exemplified by a middle school counselor participant who was originally hired in the county as a teacher and was told that attending an outdoor, six day, ABC training was a job requirement, “I had to . . . as a condition of me being hired as a teacher, I had to.” The same counselor went on to express what he would change in relation to the mandated aspect, “And, the short notice that I got, because I was called in for the interview and like, three days later, I was there . . .” This same participant addressed the theme of having a Role with Input for County Professional Learning when he relayed that:

They [County Counseling Department] usually ask us for our input for the next year on what topics that we would like to have presented . . . some that are important to us . . . other than that . . . just giving feedback and, and picking out some possible topics.

Type of Delivery. The Type of Delivery subtheme was separated into Active and Passive categories. Active was defined as participants experiencing and performing the information being taught during professional training. Passive was defined as participants solely listening to the information. Both Active and Passive were also categorized as

either an Emotional or Intellectual Reaction to the type of delivery. Emotional Reaction referred to whether or not the participant liked or disliked the training. Intellectual Reaction referred to whether or not the participant learned the information from the training. An example of an Intellectual Reaction to the Passive Style is understood by this remark about attending a technology training by a middle school counselor participant:

Occasionally in [Name of county], we have technology talks but without having the computer in front of me and even with the notes, it's totally useless, which is why I'm behind in my reports. I have enjoyed the talks. I've enjoyed seeing the data, but if I don't have the opportunity right there to do the steps, and actually say, "I might need some help with this." Cause reading it from a sheet and then trying to apply it is very different.

An Emotional Reaction to the Active style is exemplified by this account of an elementary school counselor participant's experience during an outdoor ABC training:

The power of watching other people and yourself literally burst into tears, not because they're dealing with getting one person over a group of other people but because of the struggle that internally meant for them to do that. It's just very powerful. It was a very powerful thing.

All 12 participants described having strong positive Emotional Reactions to the Active style of the ABC training, recounted here by an elementary school counselor participant:

I liked it cause you felt like at the end of the week, you know, you could do things you didn't think you could do, like, it was real team-oriented. I mean people were cheering you on that last day. He [Presenter] did a lot of, it was like a ropes course if I recall correctly and like you had to do certain things and it was a real feeling of accomplishment.

Several themes surfaced under Emotional Reaction to the Active style, such as Empathy, Engaged and Empowered, which are apparent by the sentiments expressed in the prior quotes. Three participants discussed feeling Empathy, four participants discussed being Empowered and six participants discussed being emotionally Engaged during training experiences.

Presenter Qualities. The theme of Presenter Qualities was delineated as the attributes possessed by the speakers of trainings. Presenter Qualities was split into Persona and Knowledge of Subject. Persona was defined as what the participants liked about the speaker's style. Knowledge of Subject as defined as the amount of wisdom and information the speaker was perceived to have about the subject of the training. Eight participants had positive reactions to the ABC trainer that came to the county being studied. For instance, one elementary school counselor participant described the speaker's Persona in this manner, "Entertaining, great teacher, like, teaching is a gift and he had, I mean, he had it." In addition, a high school counselor participant also remarked on positive aspects of the same speaker's Persona, "He was really great about making the point of, my style is not everybody's style. He was really good about highlighting that. Just because I did it this way doesn't mean that that's the right way to do it. A different high school counselor participant expressed what she liked about this speaker's style, "I think that the instructor is a very good instructor. And he had processed so much of it in his head that he could just do it so easily as though, you know, you are drawn in." This same participant also detailed information about this speaker's Knowledge of Subject in relation to his Persona:

It's clear he fully believes in what he does, and so not only does that bring about that enthusiasm, there was a confidence thing, that he knows what he's talking about. He's so confident about the subject and such a proponent of it.

A middle school counselor participant gave an example of how Knowledge of Subject may be different for speakers of long trainings versus shorter trainings, "Maybe that when you go to those day long training things, the presenters are more prepared, or have

obviously, just volume wise, they have a lot more to offer you than say, a one hour workshop.”

Time. One other theme under Reaction to Training was Time, which was defined as the amount of time allotted for the professional training. Two subthemes that stem from Time are More and Sufficient. More was described as participants feeling there was not enough time allotted for the professional training session, and Sufficient being adequate time allotted. An example of a Sufficient comment was from a middle school counselor participant about any type of training, “I think when you get that intensive training and you go to something and you get, it’s a whole day long. And you just get totally immersed in it.” Eight participants expressed wanting More Time in training, especially for ABC, as was apparent from this comment by an elementary school counselor participant:

Being able to maybe use it awhile and then come back and revisit it might be something that I would like to change. Because sometimes just using it, or just getting a skim of what’s, you know you don’t really get to dive into something, and so I think maybe a continued, you know maybe somehow throughout the year. They could continue and then use it awhile and then come back and process with your colleagues maybe again would be good.

Revisiting the topic of ABC was a category under More expressed by eight participants.

This Revisit category was aptly expressed by another elementary school counselor participant who wanted more detailed information to assist with implementation:

I think if I had an idea of how to use it more on my own level [Elementary]. More specifically how. Or even information towards, that would gear me towards something theoretical that would show me how to use it on my own level. It would give me more ideas on how it’s appropriate for me to use it.

Two other themes under More were Process with Colleagues and Supervision. Time to Process with Colleagues was mentioned by eight participants and Supervision was

mentioned by two participants. This elementary counselor participant explained one way this could occur:

I think just saying how did it work for you, this is how it worked for me, what were some challenges for you, how did you kids process it, did they struggle making the connection, you know, just being able to share with other counselors who have done it, not that we have the time, but in the ideal world.

Applicability. The final theme under Reaction to Training is Applicability. It is defined as a sense of relevance to the participant. For instance, one high school counselor participant reported about how she chooses which professional trainings to attend, “And I try to go to the ones that are most relevant to me.” A middle school counselor espoused why Applicability from professional training is important to her, “I am very practically oriented. I like for there to be a purpose behind everything, because if I’m not going to use it, there’s really no point in wasting my time.”

Applicability branched into two categories of Environment and Individual. Environment was construed as being relevant to the county and/or local school in which the participant worked and Individual as relevant to personal concerns. Environment was further understood to mean relevant to either the Culture of the school or to the Targeted Population. Targeted Population was whether or not the information from training was appropriate for the school counselor’s student population. Ten participants discussed the importance of the acceptance of the Culture of their school, especially the Administration or Teachers. One elementary school counselor participant summarized this view about her principal’s effect on her ability to use ABC activities:

Another factor is absolutely the support of the principal. This is not your typical classroom guidance. And if she didn’t believe in this kind of experiential, you have to do it in order to learn it, type of philosophy, then I think things would be a little different.

In reference to Targeted Population, eight participants relayed concerns about Access to students and activities needing to be Age appropriate for students. Eighty participants discussed how academic pressures have made it more difficult to have students miss class time to meet with counselors. One middle school counselor explained how she does not have enough Access to students to utilize ABC activities:

Sure, I mean, again, it's more like you wish you had access to the children so you had them regularly and then be able to do more with them. So, particularly stay with our kids who are really, really acting out, behavioral issues, those who are real active in addition to that. If I had those children on a regular basis, I think some of these [ABC activities] where you can teach the social skills through it and some teamwork, I think that would be just wonderful.

With regards to the sub theme of Individual, one elementary school counselor communicated how not all interventions work for every person, "Well, I think that kind of stuff, I mean adventure based, it depends on your personality...if you like using it."

The Individual sub theme was comprised of Buy In, Self Efficacy, and Value. 11

Participants discussed Buy In which was defined as school counselors' belief in the effectiveness of information from training. One elementary school counselor spoke about her personal reactions to an ABC training which demonstrate the theme of Buy In:

But just the idea that it could have affected me and it could have affected in general the people that were in that group with me gives it credence to the fact that it can touch someone else's life that way too, and if it can, and if even all I do is use a very small part of it, if it allows that person to see the capabilities that they have beyond themselves, then that's a worthwhile thing.

One middle school counselor participant described a training she attended about motivating students where she did not have Buy In or Value, "Like I mentioned, that academic motivation, and I honestly was not motivated. I was about to go to sleep in the

training.” She also commented that she would be unlikely to use the information from this training.

Another area that surfaced under Individual for four participants was Self Efficacy, whether school counselors believed that their actions would have the desired results, for example one elementary school counselor revealed, “... and so it’s like it’s [Information from training] good, but I don’t really know how to practice it, so it just gets filed away somewhere.” One additional sub theme under Individual was Value, which was referred to as a reaction of high regard for the Professional Training. All 12 reported high regard for their ABC training experiences, as understood by this statement from a High School Counselor participant who went through an Adventure Based training course:

I think for me, the thing that I really like about adventure therapy, is that, it’s not, it’s not about me, it’s about us solving the problem. A lot of the group experiences that I’ve had, like everyone is talking individually, individually. And with the adventure therapy, it was more, okay, here’s the problem. What are we going to do to solve it? And then sort of processing it as a group. What went well? What could we have gone better? Think about communication and those things. I don’t know. It just felt like everybody was more at ease.

Recommendations from Participants

Although the research questions for this study did not specifically address how the barriers to implementation of information learned during ABC training could be removed, all 12 participants offered helpful suggestions. For instance, in reference to the theme of finding time to Access Materials, one middle school counselor participant had this idea:

And to make it easy you’d almost have to have like a little take-it-away kit. Or maybe that’s something that people could somehow, you know create there in the training. Some sort of little, inexpensive, take-it-away kind of kit.

One area of concern that was addressed by participants was support of Administration and Faculty, which falls under the theme of Applicability. Several suggestions were provided to assist school counselors with getting buy in for ABC from these two populations. For example, one middle school counselor participant described one way she solicited her principal's support of ABC by having him witness its effectiveness for himself:

As far as my advocacy for it [ABC], certainly, I want him [Principal] to see what I do, so I have made sure that he has seen me in action. And then he then gets to see how people are responding and word of mouth.

Seven participants discussed the need to have various approaches to advocacy for ABC built into the training itself. This high school counselor participant described the approach of helping her administration understand that she is providing the school a useful service by having her Peer Leaders trained in ABC since they in turn work with other students in need:

I think part of the reason why they [Administration] let me sort of, why they let me have so much influence over that program [Peer Leaders] is because I give them something in return, if that makes sense. Because I'm training them to help them with interventions.

A few tools for ABC advocacy were offered by the Key Informant. One idea was that the training needed to include the following:

I mentioned this earlier and number one is being able to evaluate it. And if I was going to ask [Name of ABC instructor] to add one thing to it, it would be how to best evaluate the activities. The activities themselves also from the beginning to the end in terms of the perception, perception data type stuff. So kind of pre and post, because I think that any time that we can show that the interventions that we're using are effective, and, and we see it in multiple ways.

In addition, the Key Informant stressed the need for school counselors to be able to advocate for themselves through conversations with their administration. She described

how it is incumbent upon school counselors to explain the unique and effective aspects of the processing piece of ABC activities, “And I can give them [Administration] examples of activities but I also think that they need to be able to articulate, counselors need to be able to articulate the processing piece of it.” She further elaborated on this point by stating, “I don’t think they [Administration] get the meat of it. And I think that a, as school counselors, you know we need to articulate that better.” As far as getting teacher buy in for ABC, the Key Informant offered this suggestion:

And I think that the more you can do it [ABC activities] with the adults and have that experiential piece, then, then you get the buy in, because they see it. And if you go through good processing with them, they get it. They see, they see the benefit.

Soliciting teacher buy in connects to the often mentioned theme of difficulty gaining Access to students due to academic pressures. Here is one recommendation put forth by an elementary school counselor participant as to how she was able to gain Access to students to conduct an ABC group:

I heard from my teachers that they were looking for, that they had a bunch of angry friends [Students] and that they were looking for ways to see if they if anything could help with that. So, I don’t know I think if they [Other school counselors] put it out there that they might be surprised as to what kind of responses they get. Even if it meant that they, that that teacher had 30 minutes off from somebody that was giving her a really hard time.

One other suggestion about what to add to the ABC training session was in relation to the theme of Targeted Population. One elementary school counselor participant noted that it would be helpful to hear information that would answer questions about how to use ABC with younger students:

I remember when [Name of ABC instructor] came to the staff meeting that he came to. Everyone was very involved, but you could see that there were people that were kind of like, ‘How do I use that? How could I use that? I work with little, little kids.’

With respect to the Type of Delivery, there was overwhelming agreement in participants’ recommendations that the style of ABC training should be active. For example, one elementary school counselor participant expressed:

Well I know one thing would be do go through the training because I can tell my counseling partner, Oh, I love this lesson! I’m so psyched about this and then I know for her, she’s probably like, she doesn’t experience it, so she probably doesn’t quite understand how powerful it can be, so I think to fully get it...I’m sure you can read it, teach it, facilitate it, but until you’ve actually participated, I think it’s different.

The Key Informant also communicated this same sentiment from her own experiences in ABC training and from hearing feedback from other school counselors:

You know, again, walking through it, and doing that experiential piece, you know you get a very different perspective. And I think again people own it then. And so, I’ve never heard anyone say they didn’t feel like they could do the activities. I will say that I tend to do more of the activities that I actually learned, rather than the ones that are in the book.

Related to the positive reaction to the experiential style of ABC training is the theme of

participants wanting More of this training. Several suggestions were made that ABC training should be no less than a few days, and as one elementary school counselor put it, “Ideally it would be a week.”, which reflected the sentiment of a number of other participants. In addition, one recommendation in reference to Time in ABC training was to provide refresher courses for those who had the training awhile ago. Finally, a considerable amount of participants made the recommendation that some time during ABC training should be allotted towards planning and idea sharing. One high school counselor participant relayed her desire for more training:

I'd take more training, absolutely. But I think to do a six session group or something. That would be where that extra half day would be great. Because let's brainstorm about how you would lay this [ABC] out, how you would get it going.

One middle school counselor participant discussed how using ABC allows school counselors to experience its effectiveness and thus create the impetus for wanting to implement these activities:

But, if you use it with students who have trouble with that and you do it over, you have to see how it works over a long period of time and then you really can appreciate what it actually can do for real difficult cases.

In summary, participants provided detailed and extensive information describing what general and ABC trainings they attended, along with what they are able to implement. Participants were also able to specifically delineate aspects of general and ABC training and practice factors that affected their ability to implement information learned at these trainings.

Discussion

Participants provided insightful and useful information for school counselors, administrators, and counselor educators. The relevance of this information will now be discussed by dividing it into Textural and Structural sections.

Textural

General training. Participants' reported engaging in a variety of professional development training, from national to state to local school and county trainings. This is analogous to Howell et al.'s (2007) research findings regarding school counselors and their strong desire to participate in professional development. The topic of trainings varied and included classroom guidance tips, anxiety, crisis management, trauma, motivation, and ABC. The length of time in training varied from two hours to week long

sessions. Professional trainings were led by local school counselors, university professors, private practice counselors, and other experts in the school counseling field. Many of the professional trainings focused on activities that school counselors could implement, while other trainings provided reference information to be used as needed, such as updates on legal/ethical issues. Although 11 participants relayed that they valued professional training, they also reported that funding for training continues to shrink, thus limiting their ability to attend training outside the school system. This was verified by the Key Informant who mentioned that there have been significant cuts to the professional development budget at the county level. Although the literature calls for school counselors to maintain and update their skills through professional development and training (ASCA, 2010, Howell et al., 2007; Paisley & Benshoff, 1996; Splete & Grisdale, 1992), opportunities are increasingly limited due to budget cuts.

ABC training. With regard to how school counselors describe their ABC training, again there were diverse experiences. Trainings were held in a variety of settings, such as local schools, county offices, outdoor recreation centers, and high ropes courses owned by private ABC organizations. Length of time spent in training varied from two hours, to a few days, to week long day sessions, to six day sessions which required participants to stay overnight. Ten participants' training was conducted by the same local university professor who specializes in ABC, but four participants also had training experiences with leaders from private ABC organizations. Nine participants attended training in the summer, but three participants attended training during the school year. Eight participants trained with other school counselors, but four participants trained with private ABC organizations that included teachers and other counseling

professionals. During all of the ABC trainings, participants were taught through the use of experiential activities, versus listening to reference information. Nine of the participants' ABC trainings were financed by the county, except for three participants who took it as a university course while enrolled as graduate students. Participants did not communicate any issues with attending ABC training due to limited budgets because nine were paid for by the county and the other three paid for it as part of their graduate program. However, the Key Informant noted that the biggest limitation to bringing back ABC training for the county school counselors is financial in nature.

General training implementation. With respect to What the participants were able to implement that they learned from their professional training experiences, there was a medley of responses. However, there was more consistency concerning the utilization of information with specific groups of students and mode of delivery. For example, all 12 participants mentioned that they are implementing information learned from trainings within either the Peer Leading program, Classroom Guidance or the Small Group Counseling components of their school counseling programs. The amount of information being implemented was different for each participant, often based on training and practice variables. This will be discussed in more detail in the Structural Discussion section. However, all 12 participants described utilizing ABC information in areas that were aligned with their general role as a school counselor, such as with Peer Leaders, Guidance, Small Group Counseling and Icebreakers for Faculty and Students. These components also mirror the description of job roles for school counselors in this particular county, as were delineated by the Key Informant. Thus, information from training is being implemented by participants in components of their school counseling

programs that are aligned with the expectations from their county for their job role. It appears that training is helping school counselors to maintain and update skills essential for their job.

Four participants also mentioned other ways in which they are currently utilizing information from professional training that did not fall into the general role of a school counselor as specifically delineated by the Key Informant. These included training other school counselors by presenting at professional conferences, teaching a careers elective class, and working with at-risk students through a Saturday course. Three of these participants utilized ABC training for these other activities. In addition, three participants expressed that they utilized information from non ABC trainings with individuals during individual counseling sessions, such as tips for working with students with anxiety and students experiencing attention difficulties. One difference between implementation of general professional training versus ABC training is that ABC activities are meant to be used with groups, whereas other professional training may focus on updating an individual's counseling skills. In reference to what information participants were not using, all twelve participants noted that they were less likely to implement information when it was not applicable either to their job role or themselves as an individual. This expression of the importance of Applicability was mirrored in Howell et al.'s (2007) research where one finding was that school counselors have a desire for relevant professional development.

ABC Training Implementation. All 12 participants reported using ABC activities in three areas of their school counseling programs, they were Classroom Guidance sessions, Faculty Icebreakers and Small Group Counseling Icebreakers. All 12

participants reported using ABC activities as part of their guidance program, mostly with students grade three and above. Only one participant was using it as her entire guidance program. Six participants related using ABC activities with school faculty at the beginning of the year to strengthen bonds. ABC was used during other staff development sessions as well. In relation to small group counseling, seven participants used ABC activities as icebreakers, once again to promote bonding. Only two participants had the experience of running solely ABC small counseling groups. This finding is not surprising considering studies have found that school counselors experience many barriers to being able to conduct any kind of small counseling groups (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001).

One of the areas that ABC was utilized most extensively was with Peer Leaders. Six participants communicated that they used these activities with their Peer Leaders as part of their training program. For example, one middle school counselor participant used the low ropes course on the school campus for their Peer Leader training program. Two participants stated that they did not use any ABC activities in their school counseling programs at all.

Structural

The barriers and supporting factors that participants identified in relation to their ability to implement information learned from their professional training experiences manifested as two distinct themes, Practice Factors and Reaction to Training. In the following section, the heading General refers to any training that was not ABC.

General practice factors. Various Practice Factors were commonly cited as barriers to use of information. One common theme expressed by all 12 participants was

that there was not enough time in the work day to plan and implement information learned due to the increased work load of school counselors in general. This theme is consistent with reports from the literature (Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Partin, 1993). Finding the time to come back after training and figure out how to use information learned was cited as a barrier. However, participants mentioned that when materials needed to perform an activity were given at the actual training, this helped with not having to find time to locate the materials. Participants reported utilizing the information more readily when materials given at trainings were easy to use and did not require much time to comprehend.

ABC practice factors. As far as participants' reasons for either using or not using ABC activities, the same general themes existed, but were related differently. With regard to Practice Factors, Time to Plan and Implement was identified as a barrier since, as nine participants explained, ABC requires more time for processing during the activity for the intervention to be meaningful. This view that time is constricted is consistent with current research about school counselors (Dansby, 1996; Steen, Bauman & Smith, 2007). Although all 12 participants viewed ABC as a valuable model, nine felt it requires more Time than other interventions. Consequently, Time to Plan was sometimes seen as a barrier to implementation. Since this is a unique intervention, six participants expressed needing more Time to Plan. However, one participant explained how once she planned for her ABC guidance program the first time, the planning afterwards became minimal. So although ABC may require more planning time initially, this time is reduced in the long term.

One of the barriers identified to implementing ABC activities was space, especially in comparison to general professional training. Finding sufficient space to conduct ABC activities was mentioned consistently by all 12 participants, although some found it a larger barrier than others. For those participants who viewed ABC as only an outdoor activity, and/or on ropes courses, finding space was a stronger barrier. Four participants stated that they could conduct these activities indoors, either in empty classrooms or large offices, which made space less of a barrier for them. For example, in Glass and Shoffner's (2001) article on school counselors conducting ABC groups, they describe activities that may be conducted indoors and in smaller spaces. Therefore, ABC training may need to specifically address the issue of space and include recommendations for utilizing ABC activities in different ways that is amenable to the space available to school counselors at their sites.

In relation to Materials, six participants commented that the book they received from the local university ABC presenter during the training aided them in utilizing ABC activities. The book was a support to implementation since it was described as very User Friendly because it provided detailed descriptions of activities and processing questions. Five participants expressed that procuring the materials for ABC activities, such as rope or bike tires, was a barrier to utilization. In contrast, two participants did not view this as a barrier and explained that they could either ask their faculty for the materials or purchase them with a budget of approximately one hundred dollars. Barriers were perceived to be stronger when participants viewed ABC in a more traditional manner, such as outdoors on ropes courses, while those who viewed it as activities that could be performed indoors with more convenient materials viewed it as less of a barrier to

implementation. Again, ABC training may need to address some of these concerns directly.

General reaction to training. With regards to Reaction to Training, five participants noted that the Presenter's Qualities was a determining factor as to whether or not they would later use the information learned. One barrier was when the leader was not perceived to be engaging and/or knowledgeable, then participants were less likely to utilize the information learned at the training. For example, one participant recounted the irony of how she was bored in a training about how to motivate students. She further expressed that if she was not motivated by the training, she felt it was unlikely it would be motivating to her students. This feeling that the training must catch participants' attention and excitement was expressed by seven participants and related to the Presenter's Qualities.

Moreover, the Applicability of the topic of the training was espoused by all 12 participants as being an important factor as to whether or not they would utilize information learned. This theme is consistent with findings from other studies about school counselors' need for professional development to be applicable to their job role (Howell et al., 2007, Schwallie-Giddis et al., 2004). An example of a support to utilizing information learned was when it directly related to their job role. Six participants in this county felt that Applicability to their job role was strong at the county staff developments, and fairly weak at their local school. Opinions about other professional trainings varied depending on the topic and the participant's distinct job role at their school. For instance, although one participant described a crisis training she attended as

quality training, she was unable to utilize information learned since she didn't often have crisis situations at her school.

Applicability of training also relates to the theme of Choice. Eight participants communicated that they prefer to have Choice as to what topics will be presented so that there is a stronger likelihood that there will be Applicability to their job role. The same value was espoused as an important variable by Robertson (1998) in her research article about school counselors implementing professional development study groups. Since all participants view their work time as constrained, they expressed a desire to only spend time in training that they view as valuable and useful. This, again, is similar to results from Howell et al.'s (2007) study on school counselors and professional development. For instance, six participants expressed that the local school professional development is often geared towards classroom teachers and consequently many participants viewed these trainings as less Applicable.

One final reason participants noted as a support for them being more likely to utilize information learned was when the training was more experiential versus passive. All 12 participants stated that their level of interest and ability to learn was higher when they were actively engaged in the training session. One participant imparted how she was less likely to remember technology information if she could not practice it on a computer as she was learning. This sentiment was similarly echoed by the Key Informant, who stated that there is a shift in her department towards more experiential staff development.

ABC reaction to training. With respect to ABC Reaction to Training, although participants had varied experiences, all but one reported them to be positive. Participants were very complimentary of the qualities of the ABC presenter from the local university.

All eight participants who attended those trainings felt the presenter was engaging, knowledgeable and compelled them to want to implement ABC activities. For the four participants who went through other ABC trainings, there were also positive responses about the efficacy of their leaders. Thus, because of their style and effect on participants, the leaders of the ABC trainings were reasons for participants' stronger desire to implement information learned. There was strong positive reactions to the experiential style of the ABC trainings as well. All participants communicated that they felt engaged and invigorated by their ABC training experience. In addition, four noted feeling personally empowered from the training. Although three participants felt some anxiety about the nature of some of the high ropes experiences, their overall reaction to the training was positive. This speaks to the beneficial effects of experiential style trainings. Bore, Armstrong, and Womack (2010) found that when school counselors enjoy experiential trainings for group counseling, they are more likely to actually implement groups. Those planning professional development/training for school counselors may want to consider this information.

The aforementioned positive experiences related to the theme of Time. Due to participants' positive experiences, nine participants expressed a desire to spend More Time in ABC training. The four participants who went to the weeklong trainings said that the time was sufficient, but the others wanted more training. This may be due to the intensity of the week long programs, all of which were outside at high ropes courses where the emotional level of engagement required more commitment. Participants who stated the need for More Time wanted additional information about the logistics of how to conduct ABC activities in their own settings. For instance, all of the variables that

were discussed in the Logistics theme, Time, Space, and Materials were concerns of the participants that they would like addressed in training. Paisley and Benshoff (1996) also addressed this issue; they promoted providing information about these themes through long term staff development. Thus, future ABC trainers may want to set aside time for school counselors who have already conducted ABC groups to share their strategies and tips for implementing ABC activities. Because of the complexity of conducting ABC activities, one consideration might be to have participants receive the initial training, go back to their respective schools and utilize it, and then come back for either supervisory or peer feedback. This was mentioned as a need by seven of the participants. This connects to one other theme, that of Applicability to Individual. Although following their ABC training, all 12 participants in this study valued and enjoyed their experience and believed in the effectiveness of it, four were uncomfortable with their ability to conduct the activities themselves. This may be expected since the same effect has been found with respect to school counselors and other group counseling techniques (Steen, Bauman & Smith, 2008). Thus, providing ABC training participants with opportunities for supervisory experiences would boost their self efficacy and remove this as a barrier to implementation of these activities. Other researchers have found that school counselors, and other educators, also had a need for networking and collaborating with colleagues (Howell et al. 2007; Splete & Grisdale, 1992; Ediger, 1995).

One final theme under Applicability is that of ABC activities being relevant to the participant's environment, which was divided into School Culture and the Targeted Population of the students. All 12 participants saw the value of ABC for their students, but ten participants were concerned about whether or not their School Culture would be

accepting. Though five participants expressed that they had support from their Administration, a few had different experiences. All participants noted that without proper support from Administration, they would not be able to conduct ABC activities. Hence, it would behoove ABC trainers to either have a component of their training address the public relations aspect of soliciting support for ABC in schools and/or solicit that support ahead of time from school administrations. Past research has also identified administrative support as essential to professional development success for school counselors (Splete & Grisdale, 1992). Similarly, eight participants stated that due to increased academic pressures, Access to students was limited, thus making it difficult for them to perform ABC activities which are more time consuming. Similar themes in reference to increased academic pressure exist in other research with school counselors (Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001; Steen, Bauman, & Smith, 2008). Again, it would be beneficial for ABC trainers to address ways to overcome this barrier in their training.

The theme of Choice was did not surface as an issue for participants in reference to ABC training. This may be due to the fact that only one participant was Mandated to go, while it was Voluntary for the others. The only input given about Choice in reference to ABC training was that if a week long, overnight training was going to be mandatory, giving sufficient notification was necessary to enable the individual to prepare for the trip.

School counselors described their experiences in using ABC activities as efficacious. With respect to implementation through guidance and small group counseling icebreakers, all 12 participants reported that students thoroughly enjoyed the

activities and often asked for more. Additionally, nine participants described the students as gaining personal insight due to the activities. The counselor who used ABC activities for her entire guidance program stated that her teacher end of the year evaluations of her guidance program improved significantly once she switched to the ABC format. Thus, in this instance, not only did the participant herself notice a difference in the students, but other significant members in the students' lives at school also noticed positive changes.

ABC activities were utilized the most in participants' Peer Leading programs. There may be two reasons why more support than barriers exist for implementing ABC activities with Peer Leaders that relate to two other themes already discussed. School counselors already have Access to these students and so it is easier for them to conduct these activities with them. Also, in reference to participants' Self Efficacy, since Peer Leaders' as a group are generally well behaved and high functioning students, it may be less daunting to implement ABC activities with them. Conducting ABC activities with students who have behavior problems may appear to be more challenging. Moreover, the six participants utilizing ABC with their Peer Leaders described these students as not only enjoying the ABC activities but being able to apply the lessons to their personal lives.

Although only two participants utilized ABC as the sole focus for small group counseling, their responses were positive. Both participants felt the students in their groups developed insight into their negative behaviors and were transferring it to their personal lives. They also noted that the students enjoyed the groups and were excited to come to group. In addition, the participants enjoyed leading the groups. Since school counselors encounter numerous obstacles to conducting small counseling groups

(Dansby, 1996; Ripley & Goodnough, 2001), this enjoyment of leading the groups may prove to be beneficial as an impetus to work through the logistical barriers. These two participants felt that ABC groups may be especially beneficial for students with behavior problems. This is consistent with research regarding ABC groups' effectiveness with students identified as at-risk (Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Conley, Caldarella, & Young, 2007). Interestingly, when asked about whether or not they were leading ABC groups, although ten participants stated they were not, five expressed that they had not even considered the possibility. However, these participants immediately liked the idea and even pondered ways to make the ABC groups happen. Although ABC groups are found to be effective, (Beightol, et al., 2009; Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Conley et al., 2007; Orren & Werner, 2007; Shirilla, 2009), reasons for and ways to run ABC groups needs to be spelled out specifically during training in order for school counselors to implement them.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

One limitation of this study is that all of the participants worked in the same county and have similar job expectations. Thus, more research with school counselors in other counties and other states would provide more diverse information. This would be especially beneficial considering the dearth of studies concerning school counselors and staff development in the current literature. Moreover, in this group of participants there was little cultural diversity since the majority of them self-identified as Caucasian females. Although this is somewhat representative of this county's school counselors since close to two-thirds of them identify as Caucasian, a more diverse sample of

participants might provide more extensive information that could be applicable to other populations.

One other limitation of this study is that participants self selected to be in this study. Consequently, school counselors in this county who were not conducting any ABC activities following their ABC training experience may have been less likely to participate. This may have created a sample in this study of school counselors who were already more inclined to like and enjoy ABC.

An additional limitation of this study is in reference to Member Checking. Although the codes were sent out to all participants to afford them an opportunity to have a voice, no participants responded with any suggested changes. However, there is no guarantee that all participants actually read the codes.

One other area that needs further exploration is the effectiveness of utilizing ABC activities in the school setting. Although sufficient research exists supporting the general effectiveness of ABC groups with young people (Beightol, et al., 2009; Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Conley et al., 2007; Shirilla, 2009), there is a paucity of research in the school setting. This research could be expanded to include other types of ABC activities that school counselors are implementing, such as through classroom guidance and with Peer Leaders. More research about the effectiveness of ABC activities in the school could provide helpful information to ABC trainers and Counselor Educators about how to best offer ABC training. If ABC in school settings is found to be effective, this type of research could also be an important public relations tool for those school counselors who are advocating to receive training and/or to utilize the activities in the schools.

One other area that could be researched is the degree of effectiveness of ABC activities when school counselors who have not had any ABC training conduct ABC activities, as compared to those school counselors who have participated in ABC training. This could also provide helpful information to school counselors, ABC trainers, and Counselor Educators about the importance of receiving ABC training if the training is found to be effective.

The implications of this study are that counselor educators and school administrators may utilize this information to improve future training for school counselors. These results may also assist with removing barriers and strengthening supports so that school counselors can better implement skills and knowledge learned from attending professional development training. Although this research focused on professional development training with a specific emphasis on ABC training, information learned is also applicable to general training. This is especially important in an era of decreasing budgets for education. With limited resources, professional trainings must be cost effective and stakeholders must have some assurance that the information will be utilized. Results from this study, such as providing take away kits for materials needed and allowing for more choice of topics, will likely increase the effectiveness of training and thus enhance the possibility of implementation of information learned from training. Specific to ABC, since ABC groups are an effective intervention (Carroll, 2008; Combs, 2001; Moote & Wodarski, 1997; Wick & Peterson, 1997), if school systems are able to assist school counselors to be able to implement this intervention, students will ultimately benefit.

School counselors may also utilize information from this study to advocate for themselves and their professional training needs. Suggestions from this study may assist school counselors by allowing them to provide specific feedback and the ability to articulate these needs to administrators, counselor educators and county counseling departments. By communicating these needs, school counselors may help create more effective training. For instance, the suggestion of providing outcome measures that assess effectiveness of ABC interventions during training sessions may be put forth as a need for school counselors' training.

Conclusion: Personal Reflections

In conclusion, my views on how school counselors are utilizing ABC interventions in their school counseling programs have shifted. I originally thought that most school counselors in my county were not conducting any ABC groups and/or any other ABC activities. I have since realized that although most are not conducting ABC groups, they are using ABC in a myriad of ways. For instance, I did not realize the extent to which school counselors were utilizing it with classroom guidance. I was especially surprised and impressed by the participant who was utilizing it as her entire guidance program. I think more school counselors would be interested in this approach if they could participate in training conducted by a school counselor who is already putting this into practice. I was also surprised at how many school counselors had not considered conducting an ABC group, most are using ABC activities as icebreakers for other types of groups. When asked about running ABC groups, most participants expressed that they had never thought of that before and would be very interested in learning how to implement ABC groups. I find this interesting since although I took the same training, I

somehow interpreted the information differently and began conducting groups. However, I have utilized it much less with guidance. The question running through my mind is “Why do individuals attend the same training but find such different purposes for it?” I feel that conducting this research has spurred me to want to use ABC more in my guidance lessons and utilize some of the ideas I learned from my participants.

I also want to share some ideas that have aided me in conducting ABC groups. One area of concern for many of the participants was buy-in from staff and administration. In my experience, conducting these groups with students who are behavior issues causes most faculty members to be supportive of you working with these students, regardless of the intervention. Usually the administration and teachers welcome support with students who are causing classroom disruptions. (A similar sentiment was mentioned by one participant.) In addition, asking an administrator to sit in on a group session usually helps create buy in for ABC groups. For instance, your formal evaluation observation could be an ABC group session versus a guidance lesson. Oftentimes, once an administrator experiences the power of these groups with students, they will be your strongest advocate. In addition, there are many simple activities that may be conducted in even a fairly small space. Creating a simple agenda of activities is key for implementation. Since time is always of the essence, I have six activities that I adapted from Glass and Shoffner’s (2001) article that require very little materials and preparation. One final lesson I have learned in order to conduct successful ABC groups, are to have no more than six students in a group, with two of those students being strong role models.

In closing, I have personally witnessed the power of ABC activities with students. Time after time in my ten years of conducting ABC groups, I have watched in awe as students

with extreme behavior problems displayed compassion, restraint, and leadership skills during group sessions. In my opinion, the unique aspect of students actually experiencing heightened emotion at the time of learning, versus being told what to do the next time they are angry or upset, creates intense opportunities for growth. In closing, quotes from my group evaluations that asked what students learned about themselves demonstrate the power of ABC groups, “I am capable of listening”, “That I had a problem”, “Participation is the most important thing and always express yourself for your goal will be achieved”, “I’m not shy, it’s my character”, and “That it is not all about me and when you be nice to people you can accomplish something.”

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

E-mail sent to all Gwinnett County School Counselors through county wide work e-mail.

Hello everyone. I am working on research for my dissertation and am in need of some volunteer participants. I am looking for people who have at any time taken any Adventure Based Counseling course. (Such as a university course, a staff development course, and/or training by organizations such as Outward Bound or Project Adventure.) Participation in this research would include an individual interview, possibly a follow up phone call, and possibly reviewing the initial data. The total time involvement would range from 1 to 3 hours over a 5 to 6 month time period. If this applies to you and you'd be willing to participate, please let me know.

Thanks so much and have a great day! Tara ☺
w. 770-985-7452 c.404-587-6756

APPENDIX B

Georgia State University Department of Counseling and Psychological Services Informed Consent

Title: Understanding School Counselors' Ability to Implement Adventure Based Counseling (ABC) Activities Following Participation in a Training Program

Principal Investigator: Dr. Catharina Chang

Student Principal Investigator: Tara S. Morgan

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether or not school counselors are able to conduct Adventure Based Counseling (ABC) activities following participation in training and the factors affecting their ability. This information is important for county school officials, ABC trainers, and school counselors to determine the efficacy of training. In addition, we can learn how to better assist school counselors with their ability to implement activities learned during training.

You are being invited to participate because you have participated in ABC training and currently work as a school counselor. Approximately 15 participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require approximately one to three hours of your time.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview conducted by the primary researcher. The interview will be taped and later transcribed by a member of the research team. (The research team consists of the primary researcher and two Georgia State Counseling and Psychological graduate students.) All interviews will be conducted during non work hours either at your work, your home, or at an otherwise agreed upon meeting place such as a library. Times will be set up between the participant and the primary researcher. The initial interview will last approximately one hour.

You may also be asked to participate in a follow up phone conversation. Phone interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. The primary researcher will take notes during the conversation.

You may also be asked to review the coded transcriptions of each interview to assure for accuracy. It will take you approximately 30 minutes to one hour to review and make comments of the transcriptions. The researcher will send you a copy as an attachment through e-mail. You may return the interview as an attachment through e-mail.

Risks:

There is no risk greater than anticipated in a normal day.

III. Benefits:

This study was not designed to benefit you directly. However, there is a possibility that you may benefit by having an opportunity to examine the barriers and supports you experience that affects your ability to conduct ABC activities. In addition, your story may benefit school counselors in general by providing helpful information that may improve future ABC training and school county officials' ability to assist school counselors with conducting ABC activities.

IV. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

V. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The primary researcher, Tara Morgan, will have access to the identifiable information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board or the Office for Human Research Protection). We will use a code rather than your name on study records. The information you provide, (the taped interview, transcribed interview, informed consent, and demographic sheet) will be stored in a locked cabinet and on firewall-protected computers. The code sheet which identifies the research participants will be stored separately from the data to protect privacy. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally. The key and recorded transcriptions will be destroyed one year following the completion of the primary researcher's dissertation.

VI. Contact Persons:

Call either Tara S. Morgan at 404-587-6756, tara_s_morgan@gwinnett.k12.ga.us or Dr. Catharina Chang at 404-413-8196, cychang@gsu.edu if you have questions about this study.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu.

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

Participant

Date

Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX C

Demographic Information Sheet

ID Number (to be completed by researcher): _____

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Please complete the corresponding blanks or circle the most appropriate response for each of the items listed below. Thank you.

Age: _____

Gender: male female

Race/ethnicity: _____

How long have you worked as a school counselor? _____

What type of ABC training did you participate in? _____

How long ago did you participate in ABC training? _____

Are you currently an elementary, middle or high school counselor? _____

What grades do you work with? _____

What is your general job description? (i.e. tasks and duties) _____

Do you work full time or part time? _____

What type of licensure/certification do you have? _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Director of Advisement and Counseling

1. Has your county offered any staff development courses on Adventure Based Counseling for school counselors? If so, please describe the training? (For example, the duration, who conducted the training, the cost to the county, activities presented, etc.)
2. To the best of your knowledge, approximately how many counselors have been trained with Adventure Based Counseling?
3. To the best of your knowledge, what Adventure Based Counseling activities are being utilized by school counselors?
4. What activities are school counselors in your county typically expected to perform?
5. What do you see as the factors that support and prevent school counselors utilizing Adventure Based Counseling activities?

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions for Participants

1. Would you please describe your Adventure Based Counseling training experience?
2. What would you change and/or keep the same about the training?
3. What Adventure Based Counseling activities are you currently utilizing that you learned from your training?
4. What have been your experiences when you are utilizing Adventure Based Counseling activities?
5. What factors support you being able to utilize these activities in your school?
6. What factors prevent you from being able to utilize these activities in your school?
7. What recommendations would you make to assist school counselors with being able to utilize Adventure Based Counseling activities with their students?