

## Help Seeking

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### Definition of Help Seeking

Successful learning requires individual effort and the help of others. Help seeking is an essential contributor to achievement and success in school. The following definition of help seeking is provided.

### Help Seeking

- **Help seeking is an important social skill that enables individual students to know when outside help is needed, the type of assistance required, how to access the help by effectively engaging others, and how to apply what they learn to solve their problems and complete tasks.**

Help seeking is part of self-directed and self-regulated learning as students need to self-initiate the process of seeking help from others. Successfully seeking and using the help of others establishes a life-long learning skill that improves with subsequent requests for assistance. The

CBA suggests that all students should develop good help seeking skills through their interactions with the school counseling program.

## Help Seeking is Fundamental to a CBA

There are many different types of help which students can request. Seeking help in educational contexts generally suggests seeking academic help as a student would to get assistance with a writing assignment or math assignment with which they are having difficulty. Or it could be inviting guest speakers to visit the class and talk about what they do so the students can get an experiential perspective on something they are studying, or a career they would like to explore.

But in the context of school counseling programs, seeking help can be for personal, emotional and social problems they are trying to resolve. In these cases, the role of school counselors can shift from supporting students' academic progress or helping them plan for their future to helping them cope with social-emotional difficulties they are experiencing in their learning and lives.

Seeking help does not come naturally for many students. They are afraid to ask for help for a variety of reasons, all of which cause them to not speak to anyone about their problems. This is especially critical when the problems are inhibiting the student's ability to learn or to effectively cope with the barriers to their learning. Fear of coming to school or fear of taking tests or fear of being bullied are all serious issues that must be addressed, but many students do not feel comfortable asking anyone to help them, thus exacerbating the problem and in the long term making it more difficult to resolve.

Given the fact that help seeking can be learned and reinforced, school counselors should instruct students on the value and benefits of asking others for help, whatever the problems may be. The consequences of not asking for help can be emphasized along with letting students know that the school counselors are always available to help them and can find others who can be trusted to help them resolve their problems.

Help seeking lessons can be incorporated into the core CBA curriculum and integrated into lessons that deal with students' metacognitive abilities and executive functions. Parents/guardians can be engaged to support their children's help seeking activities and also to become someone their children trust to give them the help they need.

Another aspect of help seeking in educational contexts is teachers asking school counselors for help in deepening their understanding of individual students, help with diagnosing problems, suggesting appropriate strategies, and having students referred to them for help. Likewise, parents can be help seekers when they need assistance in helping resolve issues they have with their child's learning. Even though this perspective on help seeking is not directly on students asking for help, the fact that adults are seeking the help of counselors increases the potential for increased learning and achievement in the school and in school-home relationships.

## Additional Resources Related to Help Seeking

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide

concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

### Websites

This is a video entitled Studying the Ways Students Get Help with Classwork by Sarah Sparks on an American Federation of Teachers website.

<http://www.aft.org/ae/winter2014-2015/sparks>

This document defines help-seeking behavior processes, barriers to help seeking, and strategies for breaking down the barriers. It provides references to recent research on help seeking.

<http://au.professionals.reachout.com/breaking-down-barriers-to-help-seeking>

This is a comprehensive article from Wikiversity on help-seeking behavior in learning and the factors that influence it.

[https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Learning\\_theories\\_in\\_practice/Help-seeking](https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Learning_theories_in_practice/Help-seeking)

An article in Education Week on help-seeking.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/20/01help.h34.html>

Document on reasons students go to school counselors seeking help.

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/feel\\_better/people/school\\_counselors.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feel_better/people/school_counselors.html)

An article on teachers seeking help from school counselors.

<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2012/06/the-top-10-ways-school-counselors-can-support-teachers/>

Elementary lesson plan on help seeking.

<http://www.goodcharacter.com/YCC/AskingForHelp.html>

An article on “Motivational Dynamics of Children’s Academic Help-Seeking and Concealment by Gwen Marchand and Ellen Skinner that discusses help seeking , help avoidance, self-regulated learning, motivation and coping. Study was conducted with elementary school students.

[https://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.psy/files/12\\_Motivational\\_dynamics\\_of\\_childrens\\_academic\\_help-seeking--Marchand\\_Skinner--2007.pdf](https://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.psy/files/12_Motivational_dynamics_of_childrens_academic_help-seeking--Marchand_Skinner--2007.pdf)