

“Barriers to School-Based Family Counseling” - Introduction

This is a Special Topic Issue of the International Journal for School-Based Family Counseling which addresses barriers to School-Based Family Counseling (SBFC). This is an important topic for school mental health practitioners and educators who are interested in developing SBFC programs. Failure to understand and deal effectively with barriers that the SBFC program developer may encounter from other mental health professionals, educators, schools, and families, can result in the termination of the program and loss of services to children and families. This is a serious matter deserving of our attention.

The first article which addresses this issue is titled: *Reducing inter-professional barriers affecting School-Based Family Counseling* by Carter, Garner, Gerrard, Geiger, and Soriano. It describes barriers imposed by mental health professionals and educators concerned about protecting their own professional territory. It also provides a framework for understanding inter-professional conflict, and presents strategies for mitigating this conflict. The second article: *When leadership and vision fail: The dismantling of a School-Based Family Counseling leadership program* by Soriano, describes the development of a successful 17 year SBFC program that ended in being dismantled following a leadership change at a university. The third article: *Socio-cultural barriers to entry for School-Based Family Counseling in Macao* by Van Schalkwyk describes barriers encountered by SBFC professionals when reaching out to parents, guardians and families. The fourth article: *Overcoming research obstacles: Establishing and maintaining successful university-school partnerships* by Powers and Swick describes how SBFC practitioners can use effective ways to overcome barriers to entry to schools.

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