

THE COUNSELOR'S CLASSROOM

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A SIMPLE GUIDE TO GROUP COUNSELING IN HIGH SCHOOL

By Julia Taylor, MA for the [American School Counselor Association](#) for [GuidanceChannel.com](#)

Group counseling programs provide students with peer support and can be effective in helping the whole student experience academic success. However, many school counselors find it difficult to run groups at the high school level. Some feel like they don't have time to run groups, while others are concerned about conflicts with teachers regarding taking students out of the classroom and away from academic subjects.

The good news is that school counselors can creatively set up schedules that will allow the student to miss little course time and optimize the benefits from a student support group. Below are a number of suggestions for group schedules.

Brown Bag Lunch Sessions

Allow students to leave their class before lunch 5 minutes early and students will miss little academic course work. Make sure you have napkins, eating utensils, and a trash can readily available. In addition to groups, hosting brown bag sessions is a great way to provide quick information sessions to students such as college information, financial aid information, etc.

Scattered Schedule

Set up group meeting during different classes each week, leaving little class time missed. For example:

- Week One – First Period/Block
- Week Two – Second Period/Block
- Week Three – Third Period/Block
- Week Four – Forth Period/Block
- Week Five – Fifth Period/Block
- Week Six – Sixth Period/Block
- Week Seven – Seventh Period/Block
- Week Eight – Eighth Period/Block

Study Hall

If your school has a study hall block, this is the perfect time to gather students. Just remind them it is up to them to study at a later time.

Before/After School

If your school system runs activity buses and you are willing to stay a few extra minutes once a week, this time may work best. Running a group after school will be a lot less stressful to teachers and students concerned with missing class time. Also, most counselors have to get to school 30 minutes prior to students, so running a before school group may work, as well. This is also a great time to run a group centered on mental health issues to help ensure optimum confidentiality.

To help you get your program started, we offer two helpful forms online to let students know about your groups. (Both forms can be easily modified to adapt to your program by clicking on *Select Text* and making your changes.):

[Group Selection Guide](#)

This form explains to students how your program works and describes the various types of groups they can join.

[Student Group Selection Sheet](#)

This form allows students to sign up for specific groups and to also let you know what other topics they would like to cover.

Remember, running groups is simple, fun, and beneficial for everyone!

FEATURED RESOURCE: A HELPING HAND CARD GAME

This best-selling interactive game provides group members with opportunities to both identify personal growth needs and ask for supportive feedback/advice from group members. Participants take turns with this card deck requesting and offering feedback in 4 areas:

- self-esteem;
- positive lifestyle;
- coping skills; and
- relationships.

The 48 cards are color-coded by category. Each category has 11 cards plus 1 blank, to write in your own question, allowing you to adapt the focus to meet the needs of each group and provide engaging variations each time you play. Perfect for high school counseling groups, using these cards is a great way to get participants to share and support one another while staying focused on essential life skills. To purchase your Helping Hand card deck today, [click here!](#)

ABOUT GUIDANCECHANNEL.COM

[GuidanceChannel.com](#), a brand of [Sunburst Visual Media](#), is an online portal that offers newsletters and an online magazine including insightful articles, thought-provoking interviews, tips website reviews, and other content that addresses the social, emotional, and educational issues facing today's youth. We are an educational publishing company that develops award-winning guidance and health videos, DVDs games, activity books, curricula, pamphlets and print materials for the K-12 school market.

For over 30 years, Sunburst Visual Media has been producing the highest quality guidance and health programs. From the start, Sunburst Visual Media's mission has been to enhance learning and help teachers get students thinking and talking about the difficult issues they face every day. Sunburst Visual Media's reputation as the recognized leader in the field of guidance and health, is built on its ability to present tough-to-teach topics in a realistic, non-judgmental, and captivating manner. Sunburst Visual Media's prides itself on consistently providing educators with award-winning programs in such areas as: anger management, bullying and harassment, character

education, violence prevention, conflict resolution, drug abuse prevention, sex education, career education, health, and parenting skills.

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ABOUT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

Professional school counselors everywhere share the same vision to support their schools by serving their students. School counselors know that guiding students toward personal and social development leads to improved academic achievement. Through their partnership with principals and teachers, school counselors help prepare today's students to become tomorrow's adults.

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) responds to school counselors' unique needs, helping them grow individually as professionals and providing them with real tools to guide their students. As an international nonprofit organization founded in 1952, ASCA has the benefit of foresight and hindsight. It has grown to fit counselors' changing needs through social and educational movements from desegregation to standardized testing. Responding to the needs of counselors as voiced by counselors has enabled ASCA to remain vital and forward-thinking.

ASCA serves as the voice of school counselors on Capitol Hill and helps members ensure their voices are heard in state legislatures. ASCA has active government affairs representatives who monitor activities in Congress, the Department of Education and throughout Washington to advocate on behalf of school counselors' interests: funding, certification, student-to-counselor ratios and more.

A full-color bimonthly magazine, *School Counselor* provides practical information and how-to articles to help school counselors help their students and themselves. Each issue has a focus on something school counselors care about, from public relations to grief counseling, as well as departments and columns covering a range of topics. Professional School Counseling is ASCA's award-winning bimonthly academic journal, providing peer-reviewed articles on school counseling theory, research, practice and techniques. The journal and the magazine together provide counselors with the most well-rounded and up-to-date information in the field.

For more information, visit www.schoolcounselor.org or call 703.683.ASCA.

FOR ADDITIONAL NEWSLETTERS...

If you've found *The Counselor's Classroom* useful and informative, you may also be interested in subscribing to some of our other newsletters. *Dr. Playwell's Newsletter* is a unique newsletter full of play therapy techniques to help you address the social and emotional needs of children and young adolescents. *FYI From Wellness* offers practical tips and suggestions for use in the clinic or classroom written by professionals from a variety of disciplines. *The Guidance Channel Zine* is a monthly online magazine that includes interviews, website reviews, statistics and articles by many national organizations such as the National Association of School Psychologists, the American School Counselor Association and National S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violence Everywhere). To subscribe to these newsletters, [click here!](#)

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