



## *Meeting the Affective Needs of Gifted Learners*



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## Social and Emotional Needs



- The opportunity to learn with others of similar interest, ability, and drive;
- An appropriate level of challenge in the regular classroom;
- Flexible pacing through the curriculum;
- Assistance coping with heightened sensitivity, perfectionism, asynchronous development, peer relationships, situational stressors, and college and career planning.

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## Exemplary Guidance and Counseling Services that...



1. Have a schoolwide emphasis;
  2. Address diversity;
  3. Classroom teachers that use flexible grouping to address diversity;
  4. Provide access to intellectual peers;
  5. Include differentiated guidance services;
- Promote acceleration options;

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**Exemplary Guidance and Counseling Services that...**



7. Provide services that support a variety of enrichment options;
8. Encourage teachers to act as "talent scouts";
9. Provide periodic needs assessment and evaluation;
10. Seek input and require support from parents and community members;



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**Exemplary Guidance and Counseling Services that...**



11. Include a scope and sequence for the affective curriculum that...
  - Helps students understand what it means to be gifted;
  - Develops students' self-advocacy skills;
  - Strengthens students' self-regulatory abilities;
  - Teaches students strategies for coping with challenges and stressors;
  - Provides differentiated college and career guidance;
  - Increases parents' effectiveness in guiding their gifted children.



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**Affective Concerns**



- Asynchronous Development
  - Mental ability outstrips chronological age and physical development.
- Overexcitabilities (OEs)
- Underachievement
- Perfectionism
- Multipotentiality



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Dabrowski: Theory of Emotional Sensitivity & Overexcitability 

- Psychomotor
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Sensual
- Emotional



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Psychomotor 

- Surplus energy
- Enhanced excitability of the neuromuscular system
- Manifestations:
  - Rapid talk and compulsive talking
  - Nervous habits
  - Impulsive actions
  - Marked competitiveness
  - Fast games
  - Restlessness
- Psychomotor expression of emotional tension.



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Intellectual 

- Intensified activity of the mind
- Transfer of emotional tension through intellectual pursuits
- Manifestations:
  - Persistence to ask probing questions
  - Avidity for knowledge
  - Keen observation and analytical abilities
  - Capacity for intense concentration
  - Theoretical thinking and preoccupation with theoretical problems
  - Reverence for logic



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## Imaginational



- Capacity for living in a world of fantasy
- Manifestations
  - Association of images and impressions
  - Inventiveness
  - Use of image and metaphor in verbal expression
  - Vivid and animated visualization.
  - Less pure form: dreams, nightmares, mixing of truth & fiction, fears of unknown
- Intense living in the world of fantasy
- Transfer of emotional tension through imagination



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## Sensual



- Heightened experiencing of sensory pleasure
- Manifestations:
  - Delight in beautiful objects
  - Overeating
  - Need for comfort and luxury,
  - Stereotyped or refined beauty, fashions,
  - Varied sexual experiences,
  - Numerous but superficial relationships
- Transfer of emotional tension to such sensual forms as overeating and excessive sexual stimulation
- Children: need for cuddling, kissing, early heightened interest in sex, showing off, need to be center of attention



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## Emotional



- Function of experiencing emotional relationships
- Strong attachment to persons, living things, or places
- Intensity of feelings and display of emotions alone are not developmentally significant unless experiential aspect of relationship is present.
- Manifestations:
  - Inhibition
  - Excitation
  - Concern with death
  - strong memory of feelings
  - Fears, anxieties, and depressions
  - Feelings of loneliness
  - Need for security
  - Concern for others
  - Exclusive relationships
  - Difficulty adjusting to new environments



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## *Underachievers*



- Underachievers are students who exhibit a severe discrepancy between expected achievement and actual achievement. To be classified as an underachiever, the discrepancy between expected and actual performance must not be the result of a diagnosed learning disability and must persist over an extended period of time. Gifted underachievers are those who exhibit superior scores on measures of expected achievement.



■ (Reis & McCoach, 2000)

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## *Characteristics of Underachievers*



- Low Self-Esteem
- Low personal control over their own lives
- Avoidance Behaviors
- Defensive Behaviors
  - Rebellion against authority
  - expectations of low grades
  - perfectionism



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## *Characteristics of Underachievers*



- deficient academic skills
- poor study habits
- peer acceptance problems
- poor school concentration
- home and school discipline problems



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## *Underachievement: Family Factors*



- Alcoholism (Family or Self)
- Relations with parents
- Relations with siblings
- Inconsistent role models & value systems
- Minimal parental monitoring, guidance and expectations



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## *Underachievement: School Factors*



- Inappropriate & unrewarding curriculum
- Absence of opportunities to develop appropriate work habits
- Negative interactions with teachers
- Negative school environment
- Inflexible schedules or curriculum
- Extrinsic motivation
- Intense competition



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## *Internal Mediators*



- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Attribute successes or failures to outside forces
- Negative attitude toward school
- Antisocial or rebellious
- Self-critical or perfectionistic



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### Maladaptive Strategies



- Lack goal-directed behavior
- Poor coping skills
- Possess poor self-regulation strategies; low tolerance for frustration; lack perseverance; lack self-control
- Use defense mechanisms



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### Positive Attributes



- Intense outside interests; commitment to self-selected work
- Creative
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in rejecting unchallenging coursework



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### Reversing Underachievement



- Out-of-school experiences
- Parents
- Development of goals associated with grades
- Teachers
- Changes in selves...



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## Reversing Underachievement



- Opportunity to explore interests (Type IIIs)
- Relationship with teacher
- Use of self-regulation strategies
- Opportunity to investigate topics related to underachievement
- Opportunity to work on an area of interest in a preferred learning style
- Time to interact with an appropriate peer group



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## Counseling: Internal and Environmental Stressors



- Stress-management techniques
- Counseling by professionals trained to work with gifted students
  - During adolescence
  - Points of transition
- Group, individual, or family counseling
- Family guidance services
  - Assessment of child characteristics: ability, motivation, and personality.
  - Recommendations for meeting individual needs.



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## Factors Affecting Achievement: Resiliency



- Belief in Self
- Personal characteristics
- Support systems
- Participation in special programs, extracurricular activities, and summer enrichment programs
- Appropriately challenging classes
- Realistic aspirations
  - (Reis et al., 1998)



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**Resiliency: African-American Gifted Students** (Ford, 1994)



1. Improve family-school relations
  - ▣ Educate parents as to gifted characteristics and programs
2. Enhance self-concept
  - ▣ Counseling
  - ▣ Academic enrichment
  - ▣ Role models and mentors
3. Improve social and emotional relations
  - ▣ Multicultural curriculum
  - ▣ Consideration of learning style preferences
  - ▣ Teaching social competence within the community environment

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**Games Perfectionists Play**



- ▣ have an all-or-nothing view
- ▣ are highly self-critical and preoccupied with their own and others' expectations
- ▣ are critical of others
- ▣ are highly competitive and constantly compare themselves to others
- ▣ experience stress and anxiety...

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**Games Perfectionists Play**



- ▣ set unreasonable, impossible goals
- ▣ can't be satisfied with a great result and may be chronically dissatisfied
- ▣ have difficulty enjoying the present moment because they are preoccupied with overcoming the next hurdle
- ▣ are not risk-takers because they fear *failing*, not being the best and not doing it well enough...

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## Games Perfectionists Play



- are afraid of making mistakes
- are afraid of revealing their weaknesses or imperfections
- procrastinate because of their need to do something perfectly
- might spend a lot of time and energy doing something over until it's perfect...



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## Games Perfectionists Play



- are prone to depression
- have difficulty in relationships because they expect too much of themselves and others
- feel that their self-worth depends on performance and are sensitive to criticism
- cannot accept that love can be unconditional...



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## Games Perfectionists Play



- are compulsive planners
- have difficulty seeing situations, performances and projects in terms other than "good" or "bad"
- are dissatisfied with situations and relationships that are not "ideal"

■ J.S. Peterson (1993)



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## Coping with Perfectionism



- Goal-setting sessions to learn to set reasonable goals
- Time management strategies that teach students how to reapportion time by dividing large tasks into manageable parts
- Strategies that teach students to say "no"
- Successes in new areas that could foster "risk-taking"
- Support systems so students can learn to deal with stress and reward themselves for successes



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## Coping with Perfectionism



- Allow more time than you think a project will take.
- Set realistic goals but don't set them in stone.
- Start something right now instead of waiting until you're thoroughly prepared.
- Make a conscious effort to realize that your paper, project, etc., can be perfect.
- Begin your day with your most difficult task or the one you least enjoy.
- Plan to have fun without feeling guilty.
- Keep a diary of your progress.
- Remove distractions from your workplace.
- Keep a list of backup projects.



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## Key Issues for Counseling



- Being different
- Understanding giftedness
- Hostility of others
- Peer pressures
- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- Existential depression



- Silverman, 1993

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### Socio-Emotional Needs of the Gifted: Counseling Strategies



- Affective curriculum implemented by teachers.
- Relaxation techniques.
- Reading and discussing self-help books.
  - Survival guides
  - Collections of quotations
  - Guides to parenting gifted children
  - Bibliotherapy
  - Cinematherapy
  - Group counseling
  - Differentiated guidance services



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### Assumptions of Bibliotherapy



- A particular human problem exists.
- The reader must become personally involved with the situations and characters in the book.
- There is a preventative aspect to bibliotherapy.
- Bibliotherapy is a deliberate intervention with definite goals that are identified at the outset.
- A need must be identified, a book must be selected specifically for the need and the particular person in need, and a presentation and follow-up plan must be designed and implemented.



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### Developmental vs. Clinical



- *Developmental bibliotherapy* is used to describe the process of helping healthy people in their normal growth and development.
- *Clinical bibliotherapy* involves psychotherapeutic methodologies used by skilled practitioners with populations in a specific treatment program for emotional or behavioral problems.



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### Selecting Materials



- Literary criteria should be applied to materials selected:
  - Thematic dimensions: powerful vs. trite
  - Stylistic dimensions: clear vs. convoluted language; striking vs. hackneyed imagery
- Is the material a good vehicle for the goals of the discussion?



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### The Process of Bibliotherapy



1. *Identification*

- The reader comes to empathize with some fictional characters in the book
- When the reader becomes aware of the parallels, a kind of “shock of recognition” occurs, emotions run high, and the reader sees what s(he) wants to see, consciously or unconsciously



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### The Process of Bibliotherapy



2. *Catharsis*

- When empathetic identification reaches its peak, the reader is able to release pent-up emotions under safe circumstances.
- The reader feels secure that s(he) is not the person involved in the emotional circumstance.
- The similarities enable the reader to get a new perspective on his/her problems.



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 **The Process of Bibliotherapy** 

3. **Insight**

-  as a result of the catharsis, the reader achieves an integration of mind and emotions.
-  Possible solutions are identified.
-  *In order for bibliotherapy to achieve its goals, the reader must experience ALL THREE stages. That "aha" moment may not appear until the reader has read several books.*



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 **The Methodology of Bibliotherapy: Implementation** 

-  Motivate students with introductory activities
-  Provide the reading/viewing/listening experience
-  Allow incubation time
-  Provide follow-up
-  Conduct evaluation and direct student(s) toward closure



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**Sample Lesson Plan Format** 

1. *Bibliographic Entry*
2. *Story Summary*
3. *Developmental Changes Addressed*
4. *Themes/Key Concepts*
5. *Introductory Activity*
6. *Menu of Discussion Questions*
  -  Identification
  -  Catharsis
  -  Insight
7. *Follow-up Activities*



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## Benefits to Gifted Students



1. Takes strength areas (e.g., ability to conceptualize, to generalize, and to abstract) and allows them to use these strengths to support areas of need and personal growth.
2. Gifted children are usually avid readers.
3. They may experience difficulty moving through stages of development due to others' reactions to their giftedness.
4. Although gifted students may be intellectually ahead of their peers, they are likely to be at the same level socially or emotionally.
5. It is important for gifted students to read about other gifted individuals.

 (Adderholdt & Burke, 1989)

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## Multipotentiality



- Gifted children often have several advanced capabilities and may be involved in diverse activities to an almost frantic degree. Though seldom a problem for the child, this may create problems for the family, as well as quandaries when decisions must be made about career selection.

 Barbara Kerr, (1985; 1991)

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## Multipotentiality: Impact



- Early career decision
- Low self-esteem
- Academic indecision; narrow focus
- Leisure-time indecision
- Conflict between cognitive readiness and emotional underdevelopment
- Overall uncertainty
- Need for new experiences

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### Career Guidance for Multipotentiality



- ❖ Prepare them for many options
- ❖ Explore with them careers in which they would have the opportunity to synthesize interests in many fields
- ❖ Allow them to delay decision-making until college
- ❖ Give them real-life experiences in some of their avenues of interest
- ❖ Discuss the possibility of serial or concurrent careers
- ❖ Help them determine which of their interests they could maintain as avocations
- ❖ Suggest the possibility of creating new careers
- ❖ Explore life themes as the basis for career choice



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### Critical Issues in Academic Planning



- ❖ Academic planning provides a blueprint for gifted students in negotiating a program of study that truly reflects their abilities and their interests.
- ❖ Academic planning is the vehicle through which comprehensive curriculum and services can be made available to students and parents.



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### Critical Issues in Academic Planning



- ❖ Academic planning influences the extent of articulation in programming for gifted students.
- ❖ Academic planning provides a way to enhance personalized education for gifted students.
- ❖ Early academic planning prevents the narrowing of options for gifted learners at important transition points in their program.



--Van Tassel-Baska, 1993

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**Key Assumptions related to Career Counseling for the Gifted**



- ❖ Gifted and talented students require appropriate and adequate career counseling.
- ❖ The traditional definitions of career and career counseling should be broadened for gifted and talented students.
- ❖ Career counseling for gifted and talented students should be multidimensional.
- ❖ Career counseling for gifted and talents students should be differentiated.
- ❖ Guidance counselors should not be the sole persons responsible for career counseling.



-- Greene, 2002

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**Real-World Career Experiences**



- ❖ Shadowing
- ❖ Internships
- ❖ Mentorships
- ❖ Community Service/Volunteer Work
- ❖ Job Studies
- ❖ Part-Time Employment and Work/Study



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**Meeting the Affective Needs of the Gifted**



- Your Questions and Concerns?
- Where to begin?



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