

The Role of the Psychologist in the Ballarat Diocese



The primary focus of a psychologist in an educational setting is on assessing behaviour and educational competence and the conditions that enable and support it. They make decisions based on valid data and the use of effective data collection techniques to inform, monitor, and modify intervention activities. Functional analysis is a key part of this role and interventions are not determined solely on the description and categorisation of pathology.

Assessment of children and adolescents has been and will continue to be a mainstay activity of psychologists working in schools. However, the types of assessment methods and the

process of assessment have evolved over time. Assessment activities do more than simply describe or diagnose problems. Rather, the most useful assessment strategies are those that provide a foundation for implementing and monitoring effective interventions.

In addition, our psychologists focus increasingly on context and systems, and not just individuals. Their efforts are directed toward helping all students, not just those who have major barriers to their learning.

There will always be a need for psychologists in schools to support the small percentage of students who have different learning, behavioural, and social-emotional needs. However, longitudinal research points to the chronic nature of such problems and the critical need for prevention and early intervention strategies to improve long-term outcomes.

Consequently, prevention and intervention activities need to occur at various levels, with individuals, small groups, and classrooms and within entire schools. Psychologists engage in prevention and intervention activities at each of these levels, so that a larger number of individuals may be positively influenced.

Within CEB these roles include, but are not limited to, the following (depending on the need of a particular school and the individual psychologist's workload).



Primary Intervention (Tier 1) Role is to:

- collaborate with school staff and other professionals, enhance processes that facilitate a whole-school approach to educational programs, student wellbeing and behaviour management.
- empower teachers to implement sound classroom management, learning and inclusive practices.
- consult with all staff on matters that relate to the educational, social and psychological development of students.
- provide staff development in the areas of cognitive, educational, emotional, behavioural and social development.
- empower teachers to identify students 'at risk'.
- contribute to the development of appropriate policies and processes.
- advocate for students with unique needs

Early Intervention (Tier 2):

- Facilitate targeted classroom and group programmes to minimise the impact of identified risk factors for relevant students, e.g., social skills training, anger management, etc.
- consult with teachers and parents regarding early intervention activities in the classroom and at home and, where appropriate, provide and / or recommend relevant programmes.
- be a resource for teachers dealing with students who have been identified as 'at risk' of developing learning, social, behavioural and emotional difficulties.

- provide secondary consultation regarding therapy and programs for individuals and groups for a range of mental health, emotional and family issues.
- provide professional learning and information to build capacity of schools and families to improve students' learning and developmental outcomes.

Intervention Role (Tier 3):

- respond to and assist schools in response to Critical Incidents and Emergencies
- undertake educational and psychological assessment and diagnosis in relevant areas of child and adolescent development.
- observe students in the instructional environment in order to identify barriers preventing learning,
- identify appropriate intervention strategies and to evaluate the efficacy of the interventions.
- diagnosis requiring analysis in accordance with the diagnostic criteria as set out in DSM-V.
- write reports and professional letters.
- consult with and provide feedback to staff, parents, and students.
- collect, collate, and maintain student information and records to meet legislative and system requirements.

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