LSCI: one school district’s experience

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The memo on the bulletin board advertised a one-week, intensive training institute for educators interested in advancing their skills in the area of crisis intervention. Life Space Crisis Intervention training, a technique founded and taught by Dr. Nicholas J. Long, would be offered during the summer of 1995. A call was placed to the superintendent of special education for approval to attend the Institute, and the Glenbrook High Schools were quickly on their way to incorporating LSCI into a part of their everyday vocabulary.

I returned to Glenbrook with a set of invaluable tools. Using these skills in isolation for a year, I recognized the importance of implementing this new paradigm in my district. During the next two summers, Dr. Long and I trained over 50 Glenbrook faculty members – including both special education and regular education teachers, psychologists, social workers and administrators – in the skills of Life Space Crisis Intervention. We now share a common language.

One of the most rewarding aspects of having been actively involved in the training of the Glenbrook staff is seeing the newly acquired skills being used. Several weeks into the school year, as I walked through the halls, I encountered a colleague who was engaged in a conversation with a student who was clearly in crisis. It became obvious to me that the teacher was using one of the interventions she had just learned. I sought her out later, and she told me that, initially, when she realized the student was having trouble, she felt a sense of panic. As she became more involved in talking with the young man, she recalled, her ability to intervene effectively felt natural. After several minutes, she forgot about her fear and simply let the process work for her and the student in crisis.

I asked her how the student felt after they were done talking. Her response indicated that she had successfully utilized the skills she had just learned. I sought her out later, and she told me how the student was having trouble, she felt a sense of panic. As she became more involved in talking with the young man, she recalled, her ability to intervene effectively felt natural. After several minutes, she forgot about her fear and simply let the process work for her and the student in crisis.

I returned to Glenbrook a few years later, and the student was having trouble, she felt a sense of panic. As she became more involved in talking with the young man, she recalled, her ability to intervene effectively felt natural. After several minutes, she forgot about her fear and simply let the process work for her and the student in crisis.

The addition of Life Space Crisis Intervention to Glenbrook has been felt in many positive ways. Trained adults have new tools, a renewed sense of confidence and a common language. Students have begun to recognize the common language, acquire the prerequisite skills and accept LSCI as a method of intervention.

Throughout the year, I met with groups of staff who had been trained and were using the LSCI skills on a daily basis. At one meeting, as people were sharing their experiences, it became clear to me that not only had the LSCI training benefited the staff, but the students, as well. As people shared experiences with the group, a theme emerged: the adults discussed the process itself, but more importantly, they described how the student was impacted. Students have begun to recognize the common language, acquire the prerequisite skills and accept LSCI as a method of intervention.

The addition of Life Space Crisis Intervention to Glenbrook has been felt in many positive ways. Trained adults have new tools, a renewed sense of confidence and a common language. Students reap these benefits, as well. Although we have always taken pride in our ability to work with students and have used relationships as a basis for doing so, we can now better help adolescents in crisis.