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School Consultation

William P. Erchul
and
Brian K. Martens

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Conceptual and Empirical
Bases of Practice

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School Consultation

Conceptual and Empirical Bases of Practice

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To my mother, Harriet Erchul, and the memory of my father,
James W. Erchul — two extraordinary individuals whose love,
support, and guidance have enabled me to develop my abilities
and pursue life's opportunities.

—WPE

To my mother, Virginia M. Martens, for her intuitive
understanding of human nature, the memory of my father,
René J. Martens, who stood as a model of scholarship and
discipline, and my wife, Rosemarie J. Martens, who chose the
difficult task of being my friend, confidant, and guide through life.

—BKM

Preface

Consultation is an indirect model of delivering psychological services. Within this model, a consultant and caregiver (consultee) work together to optimize the functioning of a client in the caregiver's setting and to increase the caregiver's capacity to deal with similar situations in the future. In schools, for example, a psychologist may consult with a teacher about a student in the teacher's classroom. The practice of school consultation has burgeoned since its formal introduction into public education during the 1960s. Today, graduate training programs in various specialties of psychology and education require coursework in consultation, and many professionals in these areas spend some portion of their day engaged in consultation.

Consultation can be a powerful tool in delivering psychological services in schools, but only when the consultant possesses a requisite level of skill and sophistication. In preparing this volume, we envisioned its major purpose as reducing the level of naiveté typically experienced by the beginning school consultant. Toward that end, we offer a systematic approach to school consultation that targets much of the information needed for one to consult in a competent manner. The reader should note that our use of the somewhat ambiguous term *school consultant* is intentional and recognizes that consultants working in schools today represent a variety of professional disciplines. The primary intended audience for this book, however, is clinical child psychologists and school psychologists, although psychologists having other specialties are likely to find its content useful. A clear secondary audience is educational specialists, including counselors, special educators, and school social workers. What the reader must have to benefit from our approach is a solid background in psychology and well-developed human relations skills.