

## *Residential Counselor Orientation Series – Episode 1 – The Role*

There's different types of residential treatment programs for serving school-age children. The length of treatment and the setting can greatly vary.

The extent to which residential treatment is a therapeutic and transformational experience will greatly depend on the quality of the relationships formed between residential staff and the clients.

Staying in a professional role can be challenging for a variety of reasons. However, that's the ideal for which to strive.

“Counseling” can be thought of as helping people improve their ability to become centered.

It's helpful to understand the brain and personal psychology in terms of four domains of functioning:

1. Emotions
2. Cognitions
3. Behaviors
4. Executive Skills

Possible areas on which to focus during your orientation period include:

- Assist clients with becoming emotionally centered by presenting yourself in a calm and organized fashion. It's okay if that feels like you're just acting; give yourself time to grow into this complex role.
- Assist clients with becoming cognitively centered by learning the daily schedule and helping clients be organized and prepared for the tasks associated with the different parts of the schedule.
- Assist clients with becoming behaviorally centered by attending to their basic physical needs for hydration, food, rest, sleep, exercise, etc. Also take care to attend to your own basic needs so that you're able to function at a high level despite the difficult hours of your work day. Help clients learn to co-regulate their nervous system with yours by playing with them and having fun with them.
- Assist clients with their developing executive skills by supporting their self-regulation of their own emotions, cognitions, and behaviors. Asking clients what comes next in the schedule and what preparation is needed, is a simple way to get them to think ahead and practice their executive skills.