Several decades ago, I worked with John Southworth* of the Comprehensive Care Company as they introduced the IMPACT program to Idaho School District personnel. The IMPACT program introduced student Intervention processes, as suggested by SAMHSA. The program also provided tools for ongoing student support activities. These Interventions include: (1) a comprehensive student self-assessment of behaviors and attitudes, (2) a formal meeting with – student/school counselor/parent(s)/clinical to discuss test results, (3) completion of TEAM Performance Contracts when needed - and in some cases, (4) monitoring of ongoing student case activities.

After this training, the School Districts initiated and supported Student Interventions when a significant change in student’s BAAA’s occurred. (Behaviors, Attendance, Achievement and Attitudes)

Some school districts increased staffs to assist with Interventions and other districts contracted with local counselors who provided on campus services. Supplemental classes were also established in some schools to support students’ ongoing efforts after the Interventions.

After three years, Intervention activities had quantitative, positive, school district results. Student violations dropped significantly and student attendance statistics improved. ROI (Return on Investment) estimates were made and it appeared that these processes returned financial benefits that exceeded the costs. Also, coincidentally, students’ lives were improved and saved.

Initially financial support for these Intervention activities was Federal Grants. As grant funds changed, some schools recognized the benefits and included these activities as standard practices. Today, some of the original school team members are still providing interventions – using local clinical resources – with positive impacts. These efforts are now supported by teachers and counselors that are conscientious, sold on the benefits and care about their kids.

New School programs are continuously promoted by Federal and State agencies. School Districts priorities are constantly changing as funds are available. Existing staff time and focus is shifted into “funded” programs.

Personal interviews, with School Administrators, about the benefits of Interventions, have resulted in these personal conclusions. There are so many balls in the air that most administrators just want bad student happenings to go away. Attention to the academic and behavioral needs of human beings is shifting down the priority lists as new Research/Political programs are introduced.

The use and abuse of alcohol/drugs is a life threatening activity. “Proven – based” programs have shown that Interventions do work. Current trends, however, seem to support building new schools to house students that show significant changes in BAAA’s. Other programs are being established to insure adolescents have enough medications to feel good and others provide analysis of student mental health – before and after – legal issues and incarceration.

Solution: Provide Interventions for those folks you care about. This is the responsible thing to do. Ignoring this option may result in “flowers by the roadside”.

Decades of Idaho experience show that those Teachers and Counselors who care and are conscientious are still using Interventions – because they work. Individuals become Accountable.

Responsibility and Accountability practices are decreasing in popularity – but – they are not illegal. They are still popular at AA/NA meetings. Millions, of us addicts, can testify to this.

- John Southworth was a partner as we designed the iMR student intense case management processes. Southworth Associates specializes in Interventions and Intense treatment services.