

SAP COUNTY COORDINATION UPDATE
November, 2016



Prepared by: PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS)
www.pnsas.org

PENNSYLVANIA NETWORK FOR STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES INTERAGENCY UPDATE

Free Downloadable Media Literacy Curricula from DDAP

The Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs is pleased to announce that it is making available free, downloadable educational curricula to prevention providers and educators for the purpose of teaching digital and media literacy to middle and high-school students.

The "Media Straight Up! Critical Thinking Skills for Pennsylvania's Youth" (*middle school level*) and "Pushing Back: Responding to Representation of Drugs and Alcohol in Popular Culture" (*high school level*) are curricula that provide specific instructional strategies for raising young people's awareness and critical thinking skills in responding to mass and social media messages that depict alcohol, tobacco, prescription and illegal drug use. Digital and media literacy skills help students to evaluate the quality and accuracy of what they see, hear and read. They help them recognize how and why media messages appeal to their audience, sharpening awareness of unstated but implied messages.

These media literacy curricula are a resource for any prevention specialist or educator to teach youth about the important skills of digital and media literacy which can contribute to a young person's ability to understand how media messages affect their perceptions of drugs and alcohol, and may influence the choices they make.

Prevention specialists, teachers, school counselors, and community leaders can each play a role in promoting critical thinking to our students about the unhealthy messages they hear and see daily throughout today's media. To download and/or learn more about these valuable and free resources, please visit:

<http://www.ddap.pa.gov/Prevention/Pages/Digital%20Media.aspx>.

Coming Up! SAP Liaison Webinar on November 10, 2016

The Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services is pleased to announce a free on-line professional development opportunity for SAP liaisons to be held on Thursday, November 10, 2016 from 2-4 p.m. It is our pleasure to have Dr. Susan Tarasevich, as our speaker on "Strategies for Improving SAP Team Maintenance". Dr. Tarasevich is a clinical trainer for Addiction Medicine – Prevention Education Services of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. She is a coordinator, trainer and coach for a number of prevention initiatives, including Lead Trainer for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Approved K-12 SAP Training, Pennsylvania Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support Network Approved Facilitator, and Youth Mental Health First Aid Approved Trainer. This webinar will be held via the Zoom platform and registration will be required due to limited capacity. The webinar will be recorded and posted on the SAP website at www.pnsas.org for all to view.

SAP BACK TO BASICS

When Does a SAP Team Need Parental Consent?

In the *Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program Frequently Asked Questions and Best Practice Responses* (current edition of December, 2015), there is a section titled "Parent Involvement". Questions 46 and 50 in this section cover an important issue: written parental permission and SAP. Usually SAP teams are very familiar with the answer to question 46--that written parental/guardian consent is needed for the SAP process to continue from data collection to meeting with a student.

What often surprises many SAP teams, however, is that written parental permission does not end with the initial permission for SAP. There are other times in the SAP process in which written parental/guardian consent is required. Question 50 of that same section asks "When a parent/guardian gives written permission for the SAP process, does that permission also cover the mental health and/or drug and alcohol screening/assessment conducted by a SAP liaison or provider agency if recommended by the SAP team?" The short answer to that question is "no." The complete answer is as follows in the SAP FAQ: "The SAP team has to obtain a separate written parental permission for the screening/assessment. One of the functions of the SAP team is to foster parental/guardian involvement throughout the SAP process. Written parent/guardian permission should be obtained for the following three areas of the SAP process:
A. Initial onset of the SAP process (this can be before or after student information forms are collected as long as it is before student interview);
B. When the SAP team suggests a MH and/or D&A screening/assessment; and/or
C. If any in-school supports, such as an educational support group, are recommended."

Obtaining written permission as recommended is vital. It lets parents and guardians know their input is valued and they are key decision makers in their child's life. It's also one of the hallmarks of an effective SAP program (Fertman et al., 2000) *Components and Indicators of Effective Student Assistance Programs: Final Report*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

RESOURCES

Help Students Cope with Media Coverage

The [Disaster and Community Crisis Center](#) at the University of Missouri developed [Disaster Media Intervention](#) (DMI), a manual to help teachers and school staff guide students in coping with the psychological effects of media coverage after disasters like storms or earthquakes, or industrial accidents, terrorist attacks, or mass shootings. DMI's three primary goals are to help encourage dialogue, establish a sense of safety, and develop coping skills.

The manual also has resources for adults. For example, fact sheets for [parents, teachers, and school staff](#) provide an overview of how media coverage of a disaster may affect students and suggest strategies to use.

[Download](#) or print the DMI manual to help your students.

Children and Domestic Violence

The *Children and Domestic Violence* fact sheets from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network not only give information, but also specific, hands-on strategies for parents to make and keep their children safe. The series is designed to help parents explore their feelings and share their experiences, to talk to children about domestic violence, to make the most of children's playtime, to stay connected to preteens and teens, and to appropriately comfort and soothe children's fears. The fact sheets also help parents to manage children's tantrums and aggression, to aid children in an ongoing relationship with an abusive parent, to get more help for a child if things are not improving, and to learn to take handle stress and to come up with a plan for self-care. Click [here](#) to download the series.

Webinar Series on National Academies Report: Key Findings

The recently released National Academies report, *Preventing Bullying through Science, Policy, and Practice* (May, 2016), presents a lot of actionable findings and recommendations. The Children's Safety Network (CSN) hosted a webinar series this summer, highlighting three major topic areas covered in the report: The Consequences of Bullying, Bullying Prevention Law and Policy, and Preventative Interventions for Bullying. Each webinar featured

bullying prevention experts who were coauthors of the report, and they shared their own insights and supporting research. The webinars have been archived for future viewing and can be accessed [here](#).

SAMHSA's New PSAs for Communities and Organizations

SAMHSA's new public service announcements (PSAs) help communities and organizations share the message that treatment and support are available and recovery is possible. The videos are titled *Car Wash* and *Everybody Needs Help*. Click [here](#) to view them.

Safe Place to Learn: Prevent, Intercede, and Respond to Sexual Harassment of K-12 Students Resource Package Now Available

The [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#) has released “[Safe Place to Learn: Prevent, Intercede, and Respond to Sexual Harassment of K-12 Students](#)” resource package. This resource package provides a range of materials to support school efforts to prevent and eliminate peer-to-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is designed to help establish and maintain a safe, supportive learning environment and mitigate factors that interfere with learning. This resource package supports school district and school staff efforts to:

- comply with Title IX sex discrimination prohibitions and
- create a positive school climate.

Safe Place to Learn is one set of materials among a diverse collection of tools commissioned by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. This resource package includes: guidance for administrators; e-learning modules for all school staff; a coordinated response team planning guide and training module; a trauma sensitivity training module; and action steps, discussion guides, bystander supports, and other resources.

[View and download](#) this resource package.

Free Safety App Available for Schools

The [Justice Technology Information Center](#) (JTIC), a component of the [National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center](#), has launched a free app to help school resource officers and administrators address school safety and incident prevention. The app, [School Safe – JTIC's Security and Safety Assessment App for Schools](#), allows users to identify and address trouble spots as they walk through the school and grounds. The app is available for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices and is supported by the [National Institute of Justice](#).

New Teen-Focused Site Speaks to Teens, Shares Lifesaving Info

Would you believe two out of three teens do NOT drink? More importantly, do the teens or children you know understand the dangers underage drinking unleashes? Misinformation is everywhere – from movies and TV to social media and peer groups – when it comes to the topic of underage drinking.

That’s why MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) is excited to share a newly-launched, teen-focused website – [PowerofYouth.com](#) – aimed at sharing with teens the very real dangers of drinking underage and how to stand strong in their commitment of no drinking before the age of 21.

Educating the next generation about the dangers of underage drinking and riding in a vehicle with a drinking driver is a critical part of MADD’s mission – and one every parent needs to share with their young adult.

Based on feedback from a teen focus group, the site highlights the newly-refreshed [Power of You\(th\)[®] booklet](#) and seeks to empower teens to make safe and healthy decisions. The site:

- Encourages teens to be part of a group – the millions of teens who don’t drink
- Lays out the dangers in an easy-to-understand and direct fashion – with consequences teens can understand and value
- Shares strategies for how teens can approach the topic with their parents and friends

[Visit the site today](#) and share it with a child or teen. Give them a shot at a great future. Help them understand how they can be part of the group by not drinking underage AND, as a result, decrease their chances of being hurt or killed in an alcohol-related trauma.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

PASAP Eastern Regional Workshop

Friday, November 4, 2016

8:30 AM – 3:45 PM

Caron Treatment Center

Family Education Program Conference Room

150 Galen Hall Rd

Wernersville, PA 19565

Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

PASAP Northwest Regional Workshop (Grove City)

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

8:30 a.m-3:45 p.m.

Midwestern IU 4

Rooms A and B

453 Maple St.

Grove City, PA 16127

Go [here](#) for more information and to register.

Webinar to Discuss Awareness and Prevention of Sextortion

On November 9, 2016, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. ET, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will present “Sextortion: Awareness and Prevention.” This webinar will define sextortion, discuss current research, offer prevention tips, and raise awareness about the dangers of this online activity. Presenters will provide real case examples from federal and state law enforcement. The webinar will also give educators, counselors, and law enforcement preventative tools to help youth avoid online predators. [Register](#) and learn more about this free webinar.

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) Implementer Training

November 17 - 18, 2016

Center for Schools and Communities

275 Grandview Avenue, Commonwealth Room (First Floor)

Camp Hill, PA 17011

[Click here](#) for additional information and to register.

PASAP Northwest Regional Workshop (Edinboro)

Monday, November 21, 2016

8:30 a.m.—3:45 p.m.

Northwest Tri County IU5

Rooms A and B

252 Waterford St.

Edinboro, PA 16412

Go [here](#) for more information and registration.

SAVE THE DATE

PASAP-PAMLE Conference

February 26-28, 2017

Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel

State College, PA

Conference registration to open this month at www.pasap.org

2017 Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PAPBS)

Implementer's Forum

May 16-17, 2017

Information will be available at www.papbs.org and www.pattan.net.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program

The Walmart Foundation Community Grant Program awards grants of \$250 - \$2500 to schools, agencies, local community organizations, and faith-based organizations. Applications must be submitted by December 31 and meet the foundation's eligibility criteria. [Learn more.](#)

Vision of Hope Fund Open Call for Letters of Inquiry

The Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR) is now accepting Letters of Inquiry for its Vision of Hope Fund Grant. PCAR launched the fund in July 2005 to fund innovation in child sexual abuse prevention and intervention. We prioritize critical research, effective prevention strategies, teaching adult responsibility and accountability, and supporting services to children who have been sexually victimized. A total of \$50,000 will be offered to fund one or more projects during the 2017-18 fiscal year, contingent on the availability of funding and subject to approval of the PCAR/NSVRC Chief Executive Officer. One-year grants will be awarded.

A limited number of submissions will be chosen to complete a full grant application. For more information or to apply, visit <http://www.pcar.org/vision-of-hope-fund> and click on the "Vision of Hope Grant" tab.

Endowment Act—Programs Assisting Victims

The Office of Research and Child Advocacy (ORCA) of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) announces the availability of state Endowment Act funds to support residents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who have been child victims of sexual abuse.

The goal of the Endowment Act—Program Assisting Victims solicitation is to support programs or projects in meeting the needs of adult and child victims/survivors of child sexual abuse within the Commonwealth. Funds may be used to increase programs and projects that assist adult and child victims/survivors of child sexual abuse and/or increase the use of innovative programs that reach victims of child sexual abuse who are underserved/unserved,

PCCD will award one-year grants with total budgets not to exceed \$50,000. Successful applicants will be eligible to re-apply for second year awards at 80% of their year one award. Go to www.pccdegrants.pa.gov for more information and application.

NEWS

Teaching Traumatized Kids

When Kelsey Sisavath enrolled as a freshman at Lincoln Alternative High School in Walla Walla, Washington, in the fall of 2012, her mother was struggling with drug addiction. Kelsey herself was using meth. The multiple traumas in her life included a sexual assault by a stranger at age 12. She was angry, depressed, and suicidal. Her traumatized brain had little room to focus on school.

Today, much has changed in Kelsey's life. She graduated from Lincoln this spring with a 4.0 GPA while also taking classes at a community college. She is articulate, confident, and happy. Kelsey believes Lincoln changed her life.

"Teachers like to tell students that if they work hard they will succeed—that it is in their control to pay attention, do their homework, and perform well in class. But those assumptions don't work for children growing up in high-stress environments, such as those living in poverty," said Jim Sporleder, the former principal of Lincoln.

Lincoln is one of the first high schools in the country to teach through the “trauma-informed” education practice. It is the subject of the documentary [Paper Tigers](#). Since then “the school saw a fivefold increase in graduation rates, a threefold increase in students headed to college, 75 percent fewer fights, and 90 percent fewer suspensions.” It has also served as the basis of [a non-profit Turnaround for Children](#) to help schools understand the impact of adversity on learning. Read more from the producers of the documentary [here](#).

Peer Victimization in Schools: Two Studies Explore Types, Repercussions

Researchers estimate that as many as 75% of children and adolescents report experiencing some sort of peer victimization, with 10 to 15% experiencing more severe and prolonged victimization. Two new studies explore victimization by peers to shed light on who is victimized and the repercussions of such actions. Both studies suggest that earlier interventions are more likely to be successful in helping address peer victimization and its outcomes.

Peer victimization is defined as being on the receiving end of an intentional act of aggression by a peer of a similar age that is perceived by the victim as harmful. Overt victimization involves behavior such as hitting, pushing, and kicking, while relational victimization is more covert, for example, being the subject of a vicious rumor or being excluded intentionally from an activity.

The first study, which analyzed research on peer victimization in 17 countries, found that both girls and boys experience relational peer victimization, but boys experience more overt victimization. The study was conducted at the University of Alabama and the University of Connecticut.

The second study, which looked at second- to sixth-grade students in the United States, found that being victimized by peers alters the development of children's stress responses. That research was carried out at North Dakota State University, the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Researchers found a large degree of overlap between the two forms of victimization (i.e., victims of one form are likely to experience the other form), which the study's authors suggest means the two forms should be considered in relation to one another. "Because resources are limited, it's important for policymakers and practitioners who create and implement interventions to understand the differences across forms of victimization as well as the ways they are related," notes Deborah Casper, assistant professor of human development and family studies at the University of Alabama, who was the lead author of the meta-analysis.

We see an increase in relational forms of victimization as children age, so it's important for interventions to address both forms. Because relational victimization is aimed at damaging another's relations with peers and social status, it would be beneficial for interventions to include relationship skills such as communication and problem-solving skills."

Yet the researchers found differences when they examined the relation between each form of victimization and various indicators of adjustment. Relational victimization, experienced by boys and girls at similar levels, was related to higher levels of relational aggression and internalizing problems such as symptoms of depression and of anxiety, as well as lower levels of received prosocial behavior like peer support and help (called prosocial support). The older the student, the more being the target of rumors and exclusion was related to an increase in symptoms of depression and of anxiety, the study found. Casper explains: "Adolescence is a time when friendships become particularly important. As such, victimization that's intended to damage relationships is especially painful and associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety."

The study also found that children and adolescents who experience higher levels of overt victimization report higher levels of overt aggression and lower levels of prosocial support, and exhibit more externalizing behavior such as delinquency, impulsivity, and conduct problems.

"These findings point to the need for effective interventions during the elementary school years to combat peer victimization, as well as programs designed to help children who have experienced repeated peer victimization

learn how to effectively cope with stress," Troop-Gordon explains. "They also point to middle childhood and early adolescence as a critical period for implementing programs that foster socio-emotional learning skills before long-term trajectories of peer victimization or maladaptive stress responses have been established." Read more about the study [here](#).

More Child Suicides Are Linked to A.D.D. than Depression, Study Suggests

While suicide death among children under the age of 12 is rare, little is known about the precipitating factors associated with suicide in this age group. A recent study published in the journal *Pediatrics* found that children aged 5 to 11 who died by suicide were more likely to have been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (A.D.D.) than early adolescents, who were more likely to have had depression. According to Jeffrey Bridge, the study's senior author and epidemiologist at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Research Institute in Columbus, Ohio, these results suggest that "suicide is potentially a more impulsive act among children," which may have implications for screening in this age group. Bridge and other researchers, however, cautioned against drawing definitive conclusions given the study's limited sample size and the potential influence of other risk factors. The study also found that children who died by suicide were more likely to be black than their adolescent counterparts. "This study shouldn't raise alarms for African-American families that have children diagnosed with A.D.D. that they need to worry that their child will impulsively kill themselves," said Nancy Rappaport, a child psychiatrist and part-time associate professor at Harvard Medical School. "It's usually a much more complicated picture." Read the complete research study [here](#).

Community Matters in Suicide Prevention, Study Finds

While social connectedness is generally considered to play a protective role in suicide risk, recent research suggests that, in certain contexts, it may make some individuals more vulnerable. Sociologists at the University of Chicago and University of Memphis conducted a qualitative study in which they investigated Emile Durkheim's theory regarding the association between social integration and suicide risk. The authors examined an upper-middle-class, suburban community that had experienced nearly 20 adolescent suicide deaths over a 15-year period and found that it was characterized by extreme academic pressure and lack of help-seeking due to a fear of perceived failure. According to the authors, these findings suggest a need to reevaluate the impact that social cohesion can have on suicide risk, particularly among young people. "Perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this study is that it highlights the downside to social connectedness, something that is usually touted as a key tool for suicide prevention," said Anna S. Mueller, an assistant professor in Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago and coauthor of the study. "It also helps explain why some schools with intense academic pressure have problems with suicide while others do not. It's not just the pressure: It's the pressure combined with certain community factors that can make asking for help harder to do." Read more [here](#).

Early Marijuana Use Associated with Abnormal Brain Function, Lower IQ

In a new study, scientists in London, Ontario have discovered that early marijuana use may result in abnormal brain function and lower IQ. Marijuana is the most commonly used illegal substance in the world. Previous studies have suggested that frequent marijuana users, especially those who begin at a young age, are at a higher risk for cognitive dysfunction and psychiatric illness, including depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Dr. Elizabeth Osuch, a Scientist at Lawson Health Research Institute and the Dr. Joseph Rea Chair in Mood Disorders at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University, is a Canadian leader in studying both mood and anxiety disorders and the effects of marijuana.

"Many youth in our program use marijuana heavily and, despite past research, believe it improves their psychiatric conditions because it makes them feel better momentarily," said Dr. Osuch, who is also the Medical Director of the First Episode Mood and Anxiety Program (FEMAP) at London Health Sciences Centre. "For this reason, we decided to study the effects of marijuana and depression on psychiatric symptoms, brain function and cognitive function."

Participants underwent psychiatric, cognitive and IQ testing as well as brain scanning. The study found no evidence that marijuana use improved depressive symptoms; there was no difference in psychiatric symptoms between those with depression who used marijuana and those with depression who did not use marijuana.

In addition, results showed differences in brain function among the four groups in areas of the brain that relate to reward-processing and motor control. The use of marijuana did not correct the brain function deficits of depression, and in some regions made them worse.

Of additional interest, those participants who used marijuana from a young age had highly abnormal brain function in areas related to visuo-spatial processing, memory, self-referential activity and reward processing. The study found that early marijuana use was also associated with lower IQ scores.

These findings suggest that using marijuana does not correct the brain abnormalities or symptoms of depression and using it from an early age may have an abnormal effect not only on brain function, but also on IQ," said Dr. Osuch. Read more about the study [here](#).