

SAP COUNTY COORDINATION UPDATE

November, 2017



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

PENNSYLVANIA NETWORK FOR STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES INTERAGENCY UPDATE

Prevent Suicide PA Annual PSA Contest

Prevent Suicide PA is happy to announce the 6th Annual PSA Contest for Youth Suicide Prevention. As you know, we have a new website to launch the contest. Visit www.preventsuicidepa.org and click on the PSA button to find full details, including the letter to schools, school flyer, contest rules, and timeline. Be sure to read the letter and full contest rules as they outline some changes as well as unique opportunities for those who enter.

We are working to continue our partnerships with some great community organizations that have assisted us in recognizing winners in the past, including the Harrisburg Senators, Philadelphia Phillies, and Pittsburgh Pirates. This contest is open to high school youth, as well as high school-aged youth who may not be in formal schooling. Any questions can be directed to either rose.milani@jefferson.edu or matthew.wintersteen@jefferson.edu.

New SAP Flow Chart

First mentioned last month, a new SAP Flow Chart is now on the SAP website at <http://pnsas.org/Portals/1/Uploaded%20Files/SAP-FlowChart%209-20-17.pdf> which outlines the steps in the SAP process from the time of referral. There are several changes which are outlined in the "Back to Basics" section of this edition of the SAP County Coordination Update. If you have any questions, please contact your SAP Regional Coordinator. Contact information can be found [here](#).

SAP BACK TO BASICS

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP)

So, what is the exact SAP process and flow? What do the Commonwealth Approved Trainers (CATs) currently present during SAP training? What's new, remains the same, or has been tweaked? Announced in this month's edition of the SAP County Coordination Update as well as the [October SAP County Coordination Update](#), there is now a new SAP flow chart and the document link has been provided for your use. Your team may have reviewed it already or are planning to do so in the near future.

To assist the review, provided below are tips as you align your process to the PA model. What should be occurring from time of referral to completion of the intervention plan? Certain points noted are new and others are process reminders.

Since SAP commenced 33 years ago, it's always beneficial to review key steps. Have the [flow chart](#) handy as you read through the rest of this segment, however, know that not every item of the flow chart will be described.

Steps 1-3: Assigning a case manager ensures the referral is followed from start to finish and nothing slips through the cracks. With increased numbers of referrals and at times, level of severity, case oversight is essential.

Steps 4-6: It is imperative to collect and review data for all referrals made to the team. Consistency in the process is key – what's done for one referral needs to be the same for the next referral. You never want to be in the position of trying to defend why student information forms (behavior checklists) were not gathered from school staff and parent/guardian. Decisions to move forward in the SAP process cannot be determined when information is missing or non-existent. Like other programs, SAP is a data-driven decision making process.

Step 7: While we would like to believe everyone knows about SAP, that's not the case so keep that in mind as you initiate parent/guardian contact. This contact not only opens the door for communication but also relationship building. Plus, the parent/guardian can provide information about their child from an entirely different and needed vantage point.

Step 8. This step denotes the importance of obtaining written consent. This is mandatory due to the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA). As you see on the flow chart, a parent/guardian response to this request determines the team's action steps or passive oversight for now.

Step 8 – "Yes": After written consent is obtained and team discussions continue as you move toward developing an intervention plan, remember to meet with the student. Advise the student of SAP – reason for referral, program resources, and most importantly obtain his/her perspective.

Step 8 – "Yes": Developing the intervention plan. **First** look to school-based services that may serve this student well. When the issue is beyond the scope of the school, a referral to DA or MH screening or assessment may be warranted.

Referral to DA or MH screening or assessment: Written parent/guardian consent is sought. If not obtained, refer back to school-based services as the parent has already given permission for SAP. When a support group is recommended, as indicated in the [SAP FAQ](#), written parent/guardian permission is needed.

When written parent/guardian consent is obtained for referral to DA or MH screening or assessment, the liaison obtains a consent from the student to release recommendations from a screening or assessment to the parent/guardian **and** SAP team. This new addition incorporates Federal Substance Abuse Confidentiality Regulations as well as Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidance.

Specifics related to DA or MH screening or assessments are included on the flow chart. Remember, when required parent/guardian or student consents are not obtained, referral back to school-based services is always an option.

This is helpful as you begin working with the student while building a relationship with the parent/guardian.

Additional time may be needed for the parent/guardian to be comfortable with a referral for a screening/assessment. We need to afford them that opportunity just like we would expect when making important decisions.

Lastly, but fundamental to SAP – no matter what route the referral takes whether it is school-based services, community-based, or a combination of the two – review of the intervention plan is routine and on-going, along with continuing follow-up and support to the student and family. That's what makes SAP work!

For additional information, contact your [SAP Regional Coordinator](#).



RESOURCES

Keeping Youth Drug Free

Keeping Youth Drug Free is new resource from SAMHSA. This resource guide for parents offers advice on keeping children substance free. The guide reviews statistics about adolescent substance use, and provides tips on good communication. It also features substance facts and case studies for additional insight. Go [here](#) to download this free resource.

Stopbullying.gov Relunched and Updated Website!

Stopbullying.gov has been relaunched with new content, resources, and graphics. There is more information available related to [cyberbullying](#) to help you identify and prevent online bullying. Visit [StopBullying.gov](#) to see the new look and resources.

World Premiere of *Never Give Up: A Complex Trauma Film by Youth for Youth*

Members of the NCTSN (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network) Youth Task Force are passionate about reaching out to their peers. Having come through harrowing experiences in their own lives, they have a message for youth who are experiencing complex trauma: “There is hope. You are not alone. Never give up.”

The film is the latest project for the task force, including Javier Arango Evan Tischofer, Allen Brown and Julia Veronesi. The group feels this video can reach more youth who need to hear their messages about complex trauma. Asked about his hopes for the video, Tischofer, a member of the task force since its inception, said, “What I’m hoping comes from this video is to take away the stigma attached to trauma, to make our peers aware that they’re not alone and that it’s okay to ask for help.”

Veronesi believes that the video will show that “kids are a lot smarter than we think. We [as young adults] have the Ability to reflect, piece things together, and talk about things that were once traumatic.” She hopes that clinicians who see the video will gain “a better understanding of the clients and kids they are working with. I hope their view shifts and they view them more as equals.”

This gripping film features a highly diverse cast of seven adolescents and young adults who examine the shared and unique challenges faced, mistakes made, and growth attained in the struggle to transcend legacies of developmental trauma. Unexpectedly insightful, unsentimentally poignant and always real, *Never Give Up* is an offering of collective wisdom, inspiration and hope for young people ensnared by adverse life experiences such as chronic neglect, violence, abuse, bullying, and exploitation from seven peers and mentors who came just before them and found their way through. This ground-breaking product developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) specifically for youth.

Although the speakers in the video do talk about their traumatic experiences, specific details of their trauma are not the focus. They speak mostly of what it took for them to make sense of their journeys and find their way to resilience. Survival was their focus; and later, self-destructive coping mechanisms took them further into complex trauma. Watch now at www.youtube.com/nctsn. For more information on Complex Trauma, visit the NCTSN.org website at: <http://nctsn.org/trauma-types/complex-trauma>.

Sesame Street Launches Tools to Teach Coping Skills to Children Who Experience Trauma, from Hurricanes to Violence at Home

It's been a hard day on Sesame Street and Big Bird is feeling sad and angry. His friend Alan tells him it's okay to have "big feelings" when something bad has happened, and he encourages him to calm down by imagining a safe place that he can go to. Soon, Big Bird is feeling better in his dreamlike cozy nest, feeling the warm sun on his feathers and smelling birdseed cookies baking in Granny Bird's oven.

When a child endures a traumatic experience, the whole family feels the impact. But adults hold the power to help lessen its effects. Several factors can change the course of kids' lives: feeling seen and heard by a caring adult, being patiently taught coping strategies and resilience-building techniques, and being with adults who know about the effects of such experiences. Here are ways to bring these factors to life.

Sesame Street's free recently released online resources include videos, story books, games, and activities in English and Spanish aim to help children process difficult feelings and give them tools to feel more safe and relaxed when their adrenaline is racing and their emotions flare. The materials about trauma were developed in response to requests from community service providers who say they can be used broadly, said Sherrie Westin, executive vice president for global impact and philanthropy at Sesame Workshop. "When you look at the sheer number of children who are experiencing some form of trauma or childhood adversity, we thought we could do more to help," she said.

The videos and activities are designed for both children and caregivers to watch or use together, a two-generation approach meant to nurture relationships that can dramatically improve a child's chances of healing from traumatic experiences. Research shows that a consistent, caring adult is the most effective buffer for a child's stress.

Additional materials designed just for adults explain more about the research and strategies behind how traumatic experiences affect children and how they can help. Go [here](#) to access the online resources.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

PASAP Southeast Region Workshop

Caron Treatment Center,

Wernersville, PA

November 2, 2017

8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

Register [here](#).

PASAP Northwest Region (South) Workshop

Midwestern Intermediate Unit #4

Grove City, PA

November 14, 2017

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Register [here](#).

PASAP Webinar

Starting an Elementary Student Assistance Program: Not as Elementary as You May Think

November 15, 2017

2:30- p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Register [here](#).

SAVE THE DATE

PASAP Webinar

Student Athletes and Substance Use

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

Register [here](#).

2018 PASAP-PAMLE Conference

February 25-27, 2018

Penn Stater Conference Center

State College, PA

Visit www.pasap.org for more information

20th Children's Interagency Conference

April 30-May 3, 2018 Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, State College, PA

Sponsored by Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health Services PA System of Care Partners, and the PA Child Welfare Resource Center

Conference focus: The 20th Children's Interagency Conference will bring together Pennsylvania's Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) and System of Care (SOC) partners providing behavioral health services to children, youth, and young adults ages 0-26 and their families. Target Audiences: Youth, young adults, and families receiving behavioral health services; service providers, supervisors, and advocates; program directors, county planners, and behavioral health managed care organizations; and partners from all the child-serving systems, including behavioral health, children and youth, developmental disabilities, drug and alcohol, early intervention, education, health, juvenile justice, and vocational rehabilitation. Areas of emphasis: Prevention, resilience, and advocacy; preschool intervention; clinical skill development; administrative leadership and policy and program development; workshops for high-schoolers.

The conference is now soliciting proposals for both presentations and for a poster session.

The call for presentations is now online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018interagencyconf>.

Potential providers can fill this out and submit it electronically through survey monkey.

As in the past, we are looking for collaborative presentations involving service providers and youth and family members.

The call for the poster session is now online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018postersession>.

Potential poster providers can fill this out and submit it electronically through survey monkey. The poster session is scheduled for Wednesday, May 2 from 5:00 to 6:30 p. m. The poster session is an opportunity to share academic research

regarding innovative, promising, collaborative, and creative program practices focused on supporting the health and wellness of youth from birth to young adulthood and their families. All community partners are invited to submit proposals for review. Some examples include college and university-based scholars and student researchers, youth and family initiatives, awareness and advocacy groups, community collaborations, evidence-based treatment programs and other service provider agencies, as well as family, youth, and professional associations, across the Commonwealth.

For more information contact: ra-pwinteragencyconf@pa.gov. Website: <http://pasocpartnership.org/>.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion of School Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS)

The purpose of this competitive grant is to:

Support the expansion of a continuum of school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) that focus on universal prevention (tier 1), strategic intervention (secondary intervention / tier 2), and/or intensive service delivery or crisis management needs of school-aged students (tertiary intervention / tier 3). Expansion in this regard refers to any of the following:

District Expansion at Tier 1: Installing PBIS in at least one school that does not have a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for behavior when other schools within the same LEA are already implementing PBIS; and/or Building Expansion at Tier 1: Expanding tier 1 systems and practices in at least one school that already has a MTSS for behavior partially installed; and/or Advanced Tier Expansion: Installing tier 2 and/or tier 3 systems and practice in at least one school that is implementing PBIS tier 1 with fidelity.

Award Amount: \$12,000.

Applications must be received by 3:00 PM November 30, 2017 Click on the following links to access the Request for Application (RFA) and the Application:

- [Request for Application \(RFA\): 2017-18 Expansion Grant](#)
- [Application: 2017-18 Expansion Grant](#)

For more information contact Tina Lawson at tlawson@pattan.net.

NEWS

Trauma Takes a Toll on Half of U.S. Kids

Nearly half of American children have faced at least one traumatic experience, such as the death of a parent, witnessing a violent crime or living with someone who is suicidal or abuses drugs or alcohol, new research reveals according to researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. They noted, however, that effective parenting, supportive neighbors, involved schools and teaching kids how to be resilient can all help reduce these harmful effects.

Overall, 46 percent of U.S. children have faced at least one traumatic experience, and more than 20 percent have faced at least two, the Hopkins researchers found. When looking at states individually, the analysis found that nearly 40 percent of children in every state had experienced at least one trauma and, in 16 states, at least 25 percent of children had experienced at least two.

The findings came from an analysis of data from the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health, conducted by the Child & Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. The analysis was published in the September/October issue of the journal *Academic Pediatrics*.

Children who deal with trauma face an increased risk for long-term health issues, including smoking, alcoholism, depression and heart and liver diseases. The researchers found that 33 percent of children who faced two or more traumatic events had a chronic health condition that required specialized care, compared with about 14 percent of children who never experienced trauma.

The researchers noted that trauma doesn't discriminate, affecting children of all races, ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Overall, about 40 percent of white children, 51 percent of Hispanic children and 64 percent of black children experienced one or more traumatic events, the study found. Traumatic events were more common among low-income families, affecting 62 percent of children whose family income was well below the federal poverty line, compared with 26 percent of children from high-income families.

The age at which children face a trauma matters, according to the researchers. Preschoolers who had at least two traumatic experiences were more than four times more likely to struggle with managing their emotions, such as staying calm, avoiding distraction and making friends. Meanwhile, children aged 6 to 17 who faced at least two traumatic events were twice as likely as their peers to not be engaged at school, the study showed. Read about the research [here](#).

The U.S. National Institute of Mental Health has information on how to cope with traumatic events [here](#).

Child Abuse Affects Brain Wiring

For the first time, researchers have been able to see changes in the neural structures in specific areas of the brains of people who suffered severe abuse as children. Difficulties associated with severe childhood abuse include increased risks of psychiatric disorders such as depression, as well as high levels of impulsivity, aggressivity, anxiety, more frequent substance abuse, and suicide.

For the optimal function and organization of the brain, electrical signals used by neurons may need to travel over long distances to communicate with cells in other regions. The longer axons of this kind are generally covered by a fatty coating called myelin. Myelin sheaths protect the axons and help them to conduct electrical signals more efficiently. Myelin builds up progressively (in a process known as myelination) mainly during childhood, and then continue to mature until early adulthood.

Earlier studies had shown significant abnormalities in the white matter in the brains of people who had experienced child abuse. (White matter is mostly made up of billions of myelinated nerve fibers stacked together.) But, because these observations were made by looking at the brains of living people using MRI, it was impossible to gain a clear picture of the white matter cells and molecules that were affected.

The researchers discovered that the thickness of the myelin coating of a significant proportion of the nerve fibers was reduced **ONLY** in the brains of those who had suffered from child abuse. The researchers conclude that adversity in early life may lastingly disrupt a range of neural functions in the anterior cingulate cortex. And while they don't yet know where in the brain and when during development, and how, at a molecular level these effects are sufficient to have an impact on the regulation of emotions and attachment, they are now planning to explore this in further research. Read more about the study [here](#).

Want to Reduce Absenteeism? Send a Letter

When Todd Rogers, director of the [Student Social Support R&D Lab](#) at Harvard University, started doing research in schools, he found focusing on parents could offer big returns. “Parents get so little information and so little of what they get is useful,” Rogers said. A behavioral scientist at the Harvard Kennedy School, Rogers has completed a number of experiments measuring the impressive effects of simply mailing parents information about how important school attendance is.

Peter Bergman, an assistant professor of economics and education at Teachers College, Columbia University, has done similar experiments texting parents information about their children’s missed assignments, class attendance and grades. He, too, has seen significant results that are easy to replicate.

And, perhaps most importantly for schools, it doesn’t cost very much to give parents useful information, and they can be powerful partners in changing student behavior. While few schools are set up to do this, Rogers’ and Bergman’s work shows they should be.

[In one randomized field experiment](#) involving nearly 11,000 elementary school parents, Rogers and his team sent mailings that illustrated the importance of attendance, along with a note about how many days of school their child had missed so far that school year. The intervention targeted parents of students who were consistently absent. Among students whose families got the mailings, when compared to their counterparts in the study who did not, chronic absenteeism dropped 15 percent. (A student is considered chronically absent after missing more than 10 percent of all school days, whether for excused or unexcused reasons. It is considered an important threshold for a range of achievement outcomes.)

Rogers said these interventions cost about \$5-10 per additional day of attendance generated. The next-best intervention, which researchers have identified as mentors, costs \$100-150 per additional day of attendance generated. And in addition to being cheap, Rogers’ methods are easy to replicate, which makes it more likely schools will see the same results as he and his team.

Bergman has conducted several experiments texting parents weekly updates about how many assignments or individual class periods their children miss. Plenty of schools offer parents access to online gradebooks, but few parents actually log in to view them. Low-income parents are less likely to log into these systems than their wealthier counterparts. And parents whose children attend low-performing schools are less likely to log in than parents whose children attend high-performing schools. “If you just place information online, it’s possible that you increase disparities along some of the socioeconomic lines we care about closing,” Bergman said.

Bergman’s and Rogers’ research shows how important it can be to reach parents where they are — in their homes and on their phones. And [a study](#) they conducted together, in 12 District of Columbia public schools, shows how much difference automatic enrollment can make to getting parents information they can act on. When prompted, very few parents logged into an online portal to enroll in a texting program that would alert them if their children missed an assignment, a class, or had a low course GPA. But when parents were automatically enrolled, 96 percent of them remained in the program throughout the year. And their children did better because of it. Read more [here](#).