



Connecting Families to Behavioral Health Services for School Entities Without SAP Liaison Services

The below information may be useful to SAP teams (including cyber charter school SAP teams) seeking services for a student experiencing a potential mental health or drug and alcohol concern when the team does not have access to a SAP liaison. This information may also be used to support a student and/or family that are seeking services on their own.

Who to Contact

For information about mental health services and supports, reach out to the [Mental Health/Intellectual Disabilities \(MH/ID\) Program Office](#) within the county that the student resides. Contact the [Children's Behavioral Health Specialist](#), sometimes referred to as the Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) Coordinator or System of Care Coordinator.

For information about drug and alcohol services and supports, contact the county drug and alcohol office, referred to as the [Single County Authority](#).

If you need further assistance in connecting with the above county contacts, reach out to your [Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services \(PNSAS\) Regional Coordinator](#).

When to Contact

It is ideal for SAP teams to reach out to the above contacts on an annual basis, at minimum, since service availability can change. County partners may already have local resources compiled in an organized way for teams to access, such as a list or guide. In some cases, these resources may be publicly available and can be shared directly with students and families.

SAP teams can use this information to engage in resource mapping and determine the most efficient way to integrate it with information about other resources (e.g., school resources, other community supports) for use throughout the academic year.

Having proactive conversations with county partners can help identify opportunities to learn more about local behavioral health services and clarify how these partners prefer to be contacted when questions arise regarding individual students and families.

What to Ask

The following questions may be asked of county partners on an annual basis and kept track of through resource mapping, as noted above.

- What county services are available to address the identified concern/reason for referral, and who can the student and/or family contact for non-county services to obtain a list?
- What is the process to access these services?
- What is the estimated timeline to access these services? (Note: The county may only be able to answer for the county-specific services available)
- What support is available through the MH/ID program office or SCA to assist the student and/or family in accessing services?
- What interim services or supports are available in the event of a waiting period to access services?
 - Is there a cost associated with these services? Is transportation provided?
- What specific crisis resources are available within the county in the event these are needed by the student and family?

What Information to Have Available

In connecting with the appropriate mental health and/or drug and alcohol contact above for questions about services for individual students, the following information may be helpful to provide:

- The student's age/date of birth
- The school and/or district
- Information/data that helps explain the nature of the concern and reason for referral
- Information about prior services accessed, if available
- Any feedback from the student and/or family as to preferences and/or concerns, if reaching out as a SAP team member on their behalf
- All insurance information, to include private and medical assistance
- Any logistical needs of the student and/or family, including transportation

When a specific concern arises and the student and/or family is ready to seek services, it is recommended that they reach out to the county contacts directly and have the above information available. If specific services are scheduled, additional information may be requested from the student and/or family, such as the student's social security number.

In the mental health system, the student may reach out directly on their own for services if they are age 14 or older. In the drug and alcohol system, students of any age may reach out on their own for services. If the parent reaches out for drug and alcohol services for their child, it is important for the child to be present to give consent.