SAP Connection

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Prepared by: PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS)

www.pnsas.org

PNSAS INTERAGENCY UPDATE

SAP Liaison Services Infographic
SAP Liaison Services (JQRS) Infographic - highlights the 2018-19 statewide data on liaison activity, screening and assessment demographics, screening recommendations and assessment results. Go here on the PNSAS website to access and download the infographic.

2021 PSA Contest for Youth Suicide Prevention

Prevent Suicide PA is once again hosting the annual PSA contest for high school students. This is a great opportunity to engage students in a dialogue around suicide prevention, the importance of positive messaging, and communicating effectively. Staff who have participated in the past have seen this as a way to teach students on many levels (academically, socially, and emotionally), and students have been empowered to use their voice to reach out to their peers.

This year's contest submissions are due by **Wednesday, December 16, 2020**. Contest rules and submission guidelines can be found here.

All of the winning and honorable mention PSAs from previous years are available for free public use and can be accessed by visiting http://psa.preventsuicidepa.org. These are great resources to use throughout the year.

2020 Vaping Summit Recordings Now Available – On November 4th and 5th the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, Department of Health and the American Lung Association collaborated to hold a two-day virtual summit to discuss research, policies and programs regarding the vaping epidemic in Pennsylvania. Recordings of the presentations from the summit are available on the Pennsylvania Alliance to Control Tobacco website. You can find the recordings under the links for "presentations". Presentations included:
- The Evolving Landscape of Vaping and Strategies to End the Tobacco Epidemic, Jennifer Folkenroth
- Vape Lung: Emerging Evidence and Growing Public Health Concerns, Dr. Frank Leone
- Tobacco and Electronic Cigarette Use in 2020, Dr. Kar-Hai Chu
- The Inclusion of Vaping Products in Comprehensive Tobacco-Free Behavioral Health Policies, Ryan Coffman
- E-cigarettes: Linking Policy and Prevention with PACT and TRU, Niki Knopsnyder and Molly Pisciottano

Do students who feel safer at school use substances less and report less symptoms of depression?
DDAP's State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup (SEOW) looked at data from the 2019 PA Youth Survey (PAYS) to help answer this question. The SEOW developed a short report to highlight some of the PAYS data related to school safety, substance use, and mental health. According to the 2019 PAYS, feelings of safety at school among high school students are associated with decreased odds of substance use, symptoms of depression, and suicidal ideation. This data continues to emphasize the importance of efforts to focus on a positive school climate with a focus on safety, support, and social-emotional learning to provide equitable learning environments for PA youth.

PA Department of Education
COVID-19 mitigation efforts continue to require school communities, families, and students to work within changing, complex circumstances and unprecedented situations. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) continues to develop resources to help schools and families during this pandemic. With higher levels of stress and demonstrated needs related to mental health across PA, PDE would like highlight updated Mental Health and Well-Being Resources, Self-Care Resources, and Social and Emotional Wellness Resources for Families.

As November comes to a close, PDE continues our focus on creating inclusive, safe school environments for all staff and students. The Equitable Practices Hub establishes a coherent collection of resources for educational communities to promote intentional equity. If an incidence of bias or discrimination occurs, the Equity and Inclusion Toolkit provides school entities with guidance and resources to continue their prevention efforts, while also responding to incidents and assisting the recovery of the school community following the incident.

In an effort to create a common language related to trauma-informed approaches, a workgroup was developed across PA. The final document, Empowerment Through Common Language in Pennsylvania: A Dictionary of Terms Related to Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools was published in late October 2020.

SAP BACK TO BASICS

Suicide Postvention in a Virtual World
In recent editions of the SAP Connection, concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on the entire school community have been highlighted. Within the context of this global pandemic that has altered day-to-day life in numerous ways and shifted the structures and resources available in schools, experiencing the tragedy of a sudden death such as a youth suicide and determining how to respond can feel like an insurmountable challenge. For this reason, planning in advance by developing or revising postvention procedures can support school leaders, SAP teams, crisis team members, and community partners (e.g., SAP liaisons) in feeling more prepared to respond to this type of tragic loss.

What is suicide postvention?
The term "postvention" can more broadly apply to the response following a tragic or sudden death. In general, the goals of a postvention are to offer support to those that are grieving, help the school return to normal routines, and identify and refer individuals that may be at risk for additional support. In the event of a youth suicide, postvention also serves an important purpose in reducing the risk of contagion for exposed youth that may be at risk of suicide (Kerr, Brent, McKain, & McCommons, 2003; Kerr, 2010).

How is postvention part of a school's suicide prevention efforts?
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA; 2012) has identified postvention policies and procedures as one of six key components for comprehensive school-based suicide prevention. Although suicide postvention is often considered *crisis response*, is important to underscore that postvention activities serve a critical role in *prevention*, as well. In other words, schools can consider suicide postvention as part of their suicide prevention efforts. As noted above, certain youth may be at increased risk of suicidal behavior as a result of exposure to another person's suicide. Planning in

advance for a suicide postvention can help to ensure that a school is prepared to respond as best they can if this type of tragic event were to occur, with preventing further suicidal behavior or deaths as a critical goal.

The STAR-Center Postvention Standards Manual, included in the resources below, offers a comprehensive overview of the essential components of a postvention and templates that can be adapted by schools.

Considerations for an adapted postvention response during COVID-19
Due to COVID-19, schools and their community partners are operating under varying structures that may be continually changing. In the event of a death in the school community, and in particular a youth suicide, it is important for the school to acknowledge and respond as soon as is feasible and to the extent possible. For schools operating virtually or with a hybrid structure in the midst of the pandemic, a full comprehensive postvention response is unlikely. The following considerations, may help schools in prioritizing some of the essential components of a postvention response, albeit an adapted response (see Adapted Postvention Considerations for Schools for more information):

- Utilize a **team approach** to decision-making when possible to encourage multiple perspectives and support those responsible for making the decisions. Assess the capacity of existing school teams, including the availability of team members, and the need to call upon additional team members and/or community partners for support.
- Identify available **resources and supports** within the school and community that help address the continuum of needs that may arise, including those that provide for basic needs, promote safety and build connectedness, and address crisis. Community partners may be able to support the school with certain postvention activities such as screening and referrals for youth that may be at increased risk of suicide.

- Determine how to **communicate** with the school community to provide information, updates, and resources, as well as how members of the school community will be able to reach key personnel involved in the postvention response effort. This includes ensuring the accessibility of information and resources disseminated to staff, students, families, the crisis response/postvention team, and community partners.

Remember, decisions regarding a postvention response should always be guided by the immediate health, welfare, and safety of students, staff, and families, as well as adherence to federal and state guidelines.

Resources to support your school's postvention planning, preparation, and response
The following resources provide guidance, considerations, and templates on suicide postvention for schools and their community partners:
- University of Pittsburgh's STAR-Center – Postvention Standards Manual: A Guide for a School's Response in the Aftermath of a Sudden Death, Fifth Edition
- McCommons, P. & Rosen, P. (2020). Adapted Postvention Considerations for Schools
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention & Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2018). *After a suicide: A toolkit for schools* (2nd ed.). Waltham, MA: Education Development Center.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). *Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools*.

Crisis resources
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: Text PA to 741741
- TrevorLifeline: 1-866-488-7386
- Pennsylvania County Crisis Numbers

RESOURCES and NEWS

SAMHSA 42 CFR Part 2 Revised Rule
On July 15, 2020, SAMHSA finalized changes to the Confidentiality of Substance Use Disorder Patient Records regulations, 42 CFR Part 2 ("Part 2"). Part 2 protects the confidentiality of individuals in substance use disorder treatment, and establishes privacy and security requirements for written, electronic, and verbal information. The effective date of the changes to Part 2 will be August 14, 2020.

Read the SAMHSA 42 CFR Part 2 Fact Sheet for further details regarding the changes.
Recorded Webinars at http://coephi.org/
• Understanding the new changes on 42 CFR Part 2
• Understanding New SAMHSA/OCR Guidance for Telehealth SUD and MH Services;
• Maintaining Patients Confidentiality When Providing Medication for Opioid Use Disorder in Community Health Centers.

PA Department of Agriculture
Click here to find food assistance resources near you.

National Center of Excellence for Eating Disorders (NCEED)
NCEED has gathered information to help support the community as the COVID-19 crises evolve. Resources were created to provide guidance on how to support yourself, your loved ones and your patients: https://www.nceedus.org/covid/
• Eating Disorders resources for Health care workers - https://nceed.3cimpact.com/resources-healthcare-professionals
• Eating Disorders and COVID-19: What Individuals and Families/Caregivers Need to Know - https://www.nceedus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-ED-for-Individuals-and-Families.pdf

Research Highlight: Using Mobile Technology to Improve Care for Teens with Depression
National Institute of Mental Health

Depression is a serious mood disorder that is especially common among teens, with up to 20% of adolescents experiencing a major depressive episode in the past year. The need for mental health services that help teens manage and treat their symptoms has never been greater, but these services are not always available or easy to access. Making continuous mental health monitoring a part of routine medical care is one way to bridge this gap and ensure that teens with depression receive increased support when they need it.

This type of ongoing monitoring can be a labor-intensive process for both providers and patients, requiring frequent check-ins to assess patients' current health status and changes in their health over time. However, current smartphone technology offers a means of collecting and evaluating much of this health data with minimal effort. In a project funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Small Business Technology Transfer program, researchers are investigating whether this technology can be used to create a passive monitoring system that can predict teens' depressive symptoms and improve the quality of their care.

The two-phase study, led by Sami Shaaban of NuRelm Inc., focuses on an app called MoodRing Enhanced Care, which passively collects smartphone data on teens' communication patterns and social media use, as well as Fitbit data reflecting their physical activity, sleep, and heart rate. The teens, their parents, and their health care providers all have access to an online platform where they can view and discuss the data.

The first phase of the study aims to fine-tune MoodRing's predictive algorithm. In this phase, the research team will investigate whether MoodRing can use the passively collected data to predict teens' self-reported depressive symptoms with at least 85% accuracy. If so, the researchers will conduct a randomized controlled trial in the second

phase of the study that compares the efficacy of using the app in a primary care setting versus receiving typical care over a 6-month period.

In the second phase, the teens' care managers will learn about the technical components and capabilities of MoodRing. However, they will not receive any instructions about medical decision making or be asked to take any steps outside of the typical scope of their practice. If care managers become concerned about a participant's symptoms, they may decide to refer the participant for a follow-up appointment with a health care provider. The health care provider and participant can then decide the best approach to managing depressive symptoms as part of the follow-up visit.

The researchers will examine whether MoodRing leads to improvements in teens' mental health care by measuring their symptoms and adherence to the treatment plan over time. The researchers will also examine secondary outcome measures, such as the extent to which the teens utilize care services and participants' overall satisfaction with the app.

The researchers hypothesize that using the app may also benefit teens' sense of self-efficacy and social support. By engaging in the monitoring process, the teens may develop the awareness and skills to identify, track, and manage their own symptoms over time. The app also provides a safe place for teens to talk about their well-being with their parents and their health care providers. The research team will investigate whether these individual-level factors—including feelings of self-efficacy and social support, knowledge and skills, and perceived symptom severity—impact overall outcomes.

By making symptom monitoring a part of routine medical care, the hope is that these new technologies can help improve teens' symptoms and overall functioning, decrease their need for acute and crisis services, and stem the demand for more intensive mental health services.

Click here for more information on this issue and others from NIH.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

PA Parent and Family Alliance
December 10, 2020 from 10:00-11:00 AM
The PA Parent and Family Alliance website was recently updated and is full of resources providing assistance for all parents and family members of children with mental health issues. The goal of the Family Alliance is to guide families in finding a way forward, no matter how difficult the road ahead may seem.

Christina Paternoster, the Executive Director of PA Parent and Family Alliance, will walk you through the new website, how to find the resources you need and will be available for an extended Q&A. The website provides support and resources for parents and caregivers whose children (up to age 26) may be experiencing a variety of mental health challenges.

Click here to register in advance for this webinar:

Virtual 2020 Safe Schools Conference: "Keeping our Children Safe: Strategies for Schools and Communities"
December 8-10, 2020
This virtual event will focus on school safety, cyber security and relationships, bullying prevention, emergency and crisis response, and other relevant topics. Hear state and national experts present the latest research and trends in school safety,

youth violence prevention, evidenced-based program models, promising practices, and more. The conference is an exceptional professional development opportunity for school administrators, student support personnel, teachers, school nurses, SAP team members, mental health professionals, school resource officers, local law enforcement and other community partners. Registration information available here.

Means Restriction for Mental Health Professionals
December 16, 2020 from 12:00-1:00 PM
Provided by the Pennsylvania Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Team
Presenter: Dr. Matthew Wintersteen, Thomas Jefferson University
Department of Psychiatry & Human Behavior
Director of Training and Higher Education Efforts

Restricting access to lethal means during times of suicidal crises has been repeated shown to reduce the likelihood of suicide attempts and death. The purpose of this training is to examine means restriction from both a public health and clinical perspective. Strategies to effectively reduce access will be discussed https://gls-lethal-means-training.eventbrite.com

PASAP Monthly Member Webinar
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 from 2:30-3:00 PM
Preparing our students for the holidays – tips to help students cope with stress during the holidays while disconnected from school. For more information, log in at http://pasap.org/

SAVE THE DATE

Pennsylvania Association of Student Assistance Professionals (PASAP) 2021 Conference
February 21-23, 2021
Click here for more information on the conference as details become available.