SAP CONNECTION

November, 2020

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

www.pnsas.org

PNSAS INTERAGENCY UPDATE

SAP PDE 4092 Infographic

Do you know how many referrals were made to the Student Assistance Program across the commonwealth during the 2019-2020 school year? What about the grade level that had the highest number of referrals? Or the percentage of referrals that were received for elementary SAP? The SAP PDE 4092 infographic provides a visual of this information and more for the 2019-2020 school year. Go here on the PNSAS website to access and download the infographic.

SAP Team and SAP Liaison Information Request

The PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS) sent out two annual surveys via e-mail this October. One survey went to SAP teams to complete and one person from each team should submit the survey on behalf of the team. The other survey went to SAP liaison agencies and is to be completed by one individual from each agency per county/joinder. If the agency provides services in more than one county, they need to complete a separate survey for each county/joinder served. The surveys are helpful for PNSAS regional coordinators to have accurate contacts and to assist with understanding local training needs. **Please submit the surveys by November 23, 2020**. If you have questions, contact your PNSAS regional coordinator. For a list of regional coordinators click here. We appreciate your time and assistance in completing the surveys.

2021 PSA Contest for Youth Suicide Prevention
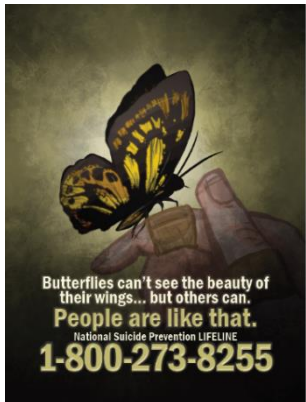
Prevent Suicide PA is once again hosting the annual PSA contest for high school students. This is a great opportunity to engage students in a dialogue around suicide prevention, the importance of positive messaging, and communicating effectively. Staff who have participated in the past have seen this 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.

SAP BACK TO BASICS

Tips for SAP in the Virtual World
The last six months have brought about changes in technology, school functioning, and disruptions to daily life. As discussed in October's SAP Connection, many members of our school community and students/families have experienced varying levels of grief. Early data being collected during the pandemic, shows that rates of depression, anxiety, high levels of stress, and behavioral disorders has increased across the United States. For students the ongoing pandemic, social isolation, and social unrest throughout Pennsylvania, may be negatively impacting their academics. The need for SAP and the supports provided by this team is vital during this time; however, many teams may be wondering how to function in a virtual world. This month we will focus on some questions that may be arising for SAP teams and districts.
Can I still get members of my school team trained? SAP trainings are still occurring using several modalities. In-person training is occurring with some providers, depending on where they are located in PA and what instruction model their schools are using. Some providers are also offering virtual trainings. Current trainings can be viewed on the [PNSAS Calendar and Events Page](#).

If our district is functioning with a virtual or hybrid model, can we still have SAP meetings?
SAP meetings have occurred throughout PA, even with the closing of schools in the 2019-2020 school year. School personnel made a valiant effort to regain normalcy and support their students and families during times of high stress. Technology has been integrated into SAP throughout PA. Some ways that SAP teams are functioning in a virtual or hybrid academic setting include:
1. Holding SAP meetings using Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or other school entity approved virtual meeting rooms.
   a. When holding meetings, think about how you will ensure confidentiality. How do you ensure that people who are not invited to the meeting cannot "pop in" to hear what is being discussed?
   b. How will you involve parents? Is there a call-in number that parents can use to increase participation and provide support to parents?
2. Providing virtual forms for teachers and parents.
   a. Check with school entity Information Technology departments to ensure you are using approved modes of communication that meet FERPA guidelines.
   b. Some schools have found Google Docs to be helpful. This can be a way of keeping everyone up to date on what is occurring; however, needs to be approved and set up by a school entities Information Technology department. Using personal Google accounts does not ensure confidentiality.

How do we get parent permission for SAP?
Getting parent permission for SAP in a virtual world can sometimes be difficult. Parent permission is still required to engage in the SAP process. Each school entity will have different procedures for gaining this permission and it is important to check with your administration. Many school entities are modeling their permission for gaining SAP in the virtual world after the procedures for gaining permission for Special Education services. However a school entity determines they want to gain permission, it is important that parents are involved in all aspects of the SAP process and are given information on supports available to them.

How do we let parents, staff, and students know about SAP?
Many school entities rely on posters and visual information in the school building to let students, staff, and families know about SAP. In a hybrid or virtual world, it is important to think about how SAP can be advertised in a different way. Some ideas include: highlighting SAP and providing contact information or a referral form on the website homepage; sending out an email blast in multiple languages to inform families about SAP; having your staff remind students SAP is available and describing what it can help with during a virtual session; or having referral forms available in the resource tab of your virtual platform. Brainstorming with your SAP team can help you come up with some fun, creative ways of ensuring staff, students, and families know SAP is still functioning!

Can Mental Health and/or Drug and Alcohol liaisons screen students and attend meetings if we are virtual or hybrid?
Each school entity and county are conducting academic, mental health, and drug and alcohol services differently and it is important to ensure that school entities are consulting with their MH and D/A liaisons about provision of services. Telemental health services have been permitted through OMHSAS and restrictions around telehealth mental health services have currently been lifted. It is important to note that, just as all school entities have different policies around SAP and mental health, so do individual agencies. Ongoing communication and collaboration with your Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol liaisons will be especially vital to the success of SAP during the 2020-2021 school year.

What resources are available to school entities, families, and providers to help navigate the virtual world?
One of the best resources available is your SAP Regional Coordinator.
Contact your county's Mental Health and Developmental Services Office or Single County Authority.
PDE also offers some specific resource pages to address needs during COVID-19 which can benefit virtual teams including: Resources for Families, Creating a Safe Virtual Learning Environment, Roadmap for Educational Leaders: Staff and Student Wellness Guide, and Promoting Positive Learning Climates Online and at Home. Teams may also wish to review the Department of Human Services Telehealth Guidelines for Behavioral Health Services.

RESOURCES and NEWS

Tips for Survivors of a Pandemic: Managing Stress
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has published a tip sheet on managing stress during a pandemic. This tip sheet describes common reactions after pandemics and other disasters and suggests ways to cope. This resource includes a section on "Common Reactions in Children and Teenagers" which is broken down by age group. It also covers financial stress and signs of the urgent need for mental health assistance and lists sources of help and support. Go here to download this resource as well as others on coping with an infectious disease outbreak.

Care. Connect. Champion: A Middle School Bullying Prevention Toolkit
The Center for Safe Schools and the Highmark Foundation collaborated to develop Care. Connect. Champion: A Middle School Bullying Prevention Toolkit website that provides centralized, easy-to-use information, activities and best practices to encourage students to share their voice and engage in preventing bullying with the support of an adult school-based advisor.

For students, this toolkit highlights an educational piece on bullying prevention, guidance on developing a peer group and activities to rollout positive bullying prevention messages in their school and communities.
This toolkit provides specific information for adult school-based advisors on school climate assessment tools, research and resources on bullying prevention and intervention, best practices in bullying prevention and intervention, and an educational piece to use with students. Tips on building relationships with students and building support within the school, activity examples, links and templates are also available to assist in building a campaign. Go here to access the toolkit.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Online Suicide Prevention Trainings Series:

Safety Planning for Mental Health Professionals
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

This training will provide an overview of safety planning, a brief clinical intervention that empowers youth to recognize and utilize their own strengths and resources to manage periods of rumination and contemplation of suicide behavior.

The approach was originally developed within the Veterans Administration system and has since been adapted for work outside of the VA and with youth and families.

November 4, 2020
12:00 pm-1:00 pm
https://gls-safety-planning-training.eventbrite.com

Postvention for Mental Health Professionals
Provided by the Pennsylvania Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Team
Presenter: Paula McCommons, Ed.D.,
Director, STAR-Center Outreach and Behavioral Health Liaison for Allegheny County Student Assistance Program, UPMC
        Western Psychiatric Hospital
Perri Rosen, PhD, NCSP
Consulting Psychologist, Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

This training provides an overview of the rationale and recommendations for conducting postvention in schools after a tragic loss. Specifically, the efforts to reduce the risk of contagion following a death by suicide will be emphasized.

November 18, 2020
11:00 am-12:30 pm
https://gls-postvention-training.eventbrite.com

Family Engagement for Mental Health Professionals
Provided by the Garrett Lee Smith Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Grant Team
in Collaboration with the COVID-19 Emergency Response Suicide Prevention and National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Grant Teams
Presenter: Dr. Guy Diamond, Drexel University
Director of Family Intervention Science and Couple and Family Therapy PhD Program

This training aims to help therapists engage parents into the treatment process of family intervention. Whether the family conflicts are contributing to the depression or inhibiting the family from serving as a resource to the youth, this intervention aims to strengthen parents' competency and commitment to the treatment process, regardless of what kind of treatment is being offered.

December 2, 2020
12:00 pm-1:00 pm
https://gls-family-engagement-training.eventbrite.com

Means Restriction for Mental Health Professionals
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

December 16, 2020
12:00 pm-1:00 pm
https://gls-lethal-means-training.eventbrite.com

Anxiety Webinar Series - Especially for Teachers: Anxiety Awareness - a free, 3-part on-demand webinar series!
Learners Edge is proud to partner with licensed School Social Worker Jaime McNatt to bring you a free, 3-part on-demand webinar series on one of today's most pressing issues facing youth - anxiety. As educators, we are a critical component in our students' success from a personal and an academic standpoint. Learn how you can help students succeed, how anxiety can affect you as an educator, and how you can work together as a school community.

Part 1: Students and Anxiety
Today's fast-paced, high stress, technology-filled world is wreaking havoc on our students' mental health. Pulled in so many different directions, students are experiencing anxiety like never before. Learning how to support students who have anxiety is an essential skill every educator needs to know. In Part I of this 3-part webinar series, you will learn about the differences between "good" and "bad" anxiety, recognize how anxiety is manifested in passive or aggressive behaviors, and develop classroom strategies to ensure students are supported and understood.
[Watch webinar on demand](#).

Part II: Teachers and Anxiety
Like students, teachers too, are vulnerable to mental health struggles that impact their daily lives. With so many demands, it is essential for educators to insist on taking care of both their physical and mental health. In Part II of this three-part series, teachers will learn about moral injury, burn-out, and the causes of teacher anxiety while gaining strategies for self-care, wellness and work-life balance.
[Watch webinar on demand](#).

Part III: Schools and Anxiety
One of the most anxiety inducing things to contemplate is school safety. Schools are now rehearsing lock downs and safety drills for a variety of different we-hope-it-never-happens scenarios. While some argue these practices are catalysts for fear and anxiety, others argue they are necessary to equip students, teachers and schools with plans for how to respond in a crisis. In Part III of our 3-part series on anxiety, you will learn how issues of school safety can create anxiety for all, including those in charge of keeping students safe at school.
[Watch webinar on demand.](#)

Kognito Free On-Demand Webinar
District Roundtable: Meeting the Emotional Needs of Students and Educators
In this roundtable discussion hosted by Education Week, we explore how districts are ensuring that their teachers and staff are prepared to support student mental health and trauma**.** Go [here](#) to watch the webinar and access the presentation slides.

Webinar: Recognizing Anxiety in Youth
The Great Lakes Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network (MHTTC) hosted a webinar titled "Recognizing Anxiety in Youth" in August with over 220 educators, school staff, child advocates, and parents in attendance. The webinar focused on helping educators and families recognize the signs of anxiety in youth and included information on wellness and resiliency, common anxiety disorders in youth, and supporting students with anxiety. It also focused on how educators and families can help students manage anxiety during this time of uncertainty amidst the pandemic and the start of the school year. Click [here](#) to access the recording.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) Online
Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) are promising practices for disaster behavioral health response and recovery. Both PFA and SPR were developed by the National Center for PTSD and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, as well as other individuals involved in coordinating and participating in disaster response and recovery.
PFA and SPR intervention strategies are intended for use with children, adolescents, parents and caretakers, families, and adults who are survivors or witnesses exposed to disaster or terrorism. PFA and SPR can also be provided to first responders and other disaster relief workers.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) online includes a 6-hour interactive course that puts the participant in the role of a provider in a post-disaster scene. This professionally-narrated course is for individuals new to disaster response who want to learn the core goals of PFA, as well as for seasoned practitioners who want a review. It features innovative activities, video demonstrations, and mentor tips from the nation's trauma experts and survivors. PFA online also offers a Learning Community where participants can share about experiences using PFA in the field, receive guidance during times of disaster, and obtain additional resources and training. (*NOTE: PFA Online will be updated to a new version in January 2021. Please plan to either finish PFA Online by December 2020 or wait until January 2021 for the new course. You will not be able to finish your in-progress course once we have updated. If you are in the process of taking PFA online when the course is retired at the end of December, you will need to retake the new version of PFA in order to receive your certificate. If you have completed the current version of PFA Online, be sure to download your certificate before the course update occurs.*)

Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) is a five hour interactive course designed for providers to help survivors gain skills to manage distress and cope with post-disaster stress and adversity. This course is for individuals who want to learn about using SPR, learning the goals and rationale of each core skill, delivering SPR, and supporting survivors in the aftermath of a disaster or traumatic event.

Go here to learn more about these online courses and to register.

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.

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.

GRANTS

Community Violence Prevention/Reduction Funding from PCCD
All eligible community-based organizations, municipalities, and institutions of higher education can apply today for up to $300,000 per application over a two-year project period to implement projects to address community violence in Pennsylvania's communities. This funding comes from the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).
All applications must be submitted electronically through PCCD's Egrants System.
Timelines:
- Application Deadline: **November 10, 2020**
- Recommended applications approved: **January, 2021**
- Targeted start date for all projects: **February 1, 2021**

One aspect of Act 44 of 2018 provided for up to $7.5 million in funding for local efforts to reduce and/or prevent violence for these specific purposes:

- Increasing access to quality trauma-informed support services and behavioral health care by linking the community with local trauma support and behavioral health systems;

- Providing health services and intervention strategies by coordinating the services provided by eligible applicants and coordinated care organizations, public health entities, nonprofit youth service providers and community-based organizations;
- Providing mentoring and other intervention models to children and their families who have experienced trauma or are at risk of experiencing trauma, including those who are low-income, homeless, in foster care, involved in the criminal justice system, unemployed, experiencing a mental illness or substance abuse disorder or not enrolled in or at risk of dropping out of an educational institution;
- Fostering and promoting communication between the school entity, community and law enforcement; or
- Any other program or model designed to reduce community violence and approved by the committee.

For FY 20-21, the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC) has prioritized applications that intend to utilize evidence-based or evidence-informed programs to reduce or prevent community-based violence (e.g., gun violence, gang violence, etc.) in areas identified with high-violent crime rates using Uniform Crime Report offense data or similar local crime statistics. This prioritization does not preclude any other application for any other type of community violence prevention but does mean that applications collectively addressing these areas will receive priority in the review process.

Click here to access the funding announcement.