

# SAP CONNECTION

January, 2021



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

[www.pnsas.org](http://www.pnsas.org)

## PNSAS INTERAGENCY UPDATE

*Best wishes for a Happy New Year!*

*Make time to celebrate the little things along the journey!*

*~ PNSAS Staff*

## SAP BACK TO BASICS

### **Build Strong Positive Parent/Guardian & SAP Team Collaboration**

Is your SAP team frustrated with lack of parent/guardian involvement? Tired of trying to engage them in the SAP process? If you have answered “yes” to either of these questions and are looking for successful collaboration with parents/guardians, then you need to add the Stages of Change model and Motivational Interviewing (MI) to your toolbox.

The Stages of Change Model simply looks at how ready a person is to make a change in behavior through a series of five stages. Those five stages are:

- Pre-contemplation - Not even thinking about making a change.
- Contemplation - Beginning to consider a change, but not ready to make commitment to do it.
- Preparation - Preparing for action to change in the near future.
- Action - Actively implementing a plan for change.
- Maintenance - Maintaining the change.

Stage of Change	What it Looks Like	How to Respond
Pre-contemplation	Not even thinking about making a change. Nothing needs to change.	Just build rapport and trust. Try to increase awareness.
Contemplation	Beginning to consider a change, but not ready to make a commitment to do it.	MI is most effective in this stage. Develop discrepancies, promote self-efficacy and help move them towards the goal.

Preparation	Preparing for action to change in the near future.	MI is most effective in this stage. Develop discrepancies, promote self-efficacy and help move them towards the goal.
Action	Actively implementing a plan for change.	Offer assistance and support, check-in with them.
Maintenance	Maintaining the change.	Support and continue to build rapport. Follow-up.

It is important to identify which stage someone is in if you want to build a successful collaboration. The stages of change are key, but they are only one part. The other part is Motivational Interviewing. MI is a communication style which attempts to increase a person’s awareness of a behavior and the benefits of change. MI is a “collaborative, person-centered form of guiding to elicit and strengthen the motivation for change.” (Miller and Rollnick) When you identify the stage of change a person is in, you can work with them using MI to help them discover their own reasons for why change may be needed and resolve the ambivalence they might have. Instead of debating with the parent or falling into another communication trap, identify their stage of change and use MI. Instead of meeting resistance with resistance, SAP Professionals can roll with it. This will reduce your frustration and their resistance and help move them towards the next stage in the model.

Motivational Interviewing is comprised of four core communication skills which make up the acronym OARS which are:

- Open-ended questions which draw out experiences, perspective and ideas. They can be a guide for reflection on how change may be meaningful or even possible.
- Affirmations of strengths build hope and confidence in the ability to change.
- Reflections are based on careful listening and trying to understand what the person is saying, by repeating and rephrasing what is being communicated.
- Summarizing ensures that there is a shared understanding and reinforces key points.

The next time you are contacting parents/guardians about a student being referred to SAP, take a step back. Remember your goal is to build a successful working relationship. You will need to determine which stage of change they are in. You may be in the "action stage" wanting that SAP permission signed but the parents/guardians may be in “pre-contemplation” or “contemplation”, you will need to adjust your approach and keep the lines of communication open. Work on building a trusting relationship by utilizing OARS. This takes time, but increases the likelihood that the parents/guardians will collaborate with the SAP team so their child can be successful in school. And, isn’t that what the Student Assistance Process is all about?

**RESOURCES and NEWS**

**Grandfamilies Resource Hub**

The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center has launched a new Grandfamilies resource hub. Relatives who provide care for minor children are referred to as kinship caregivers, and grandfamilies are one of the forms of kinship caregiving. The [GrandUnderstandings](#) project provides resources to assist grandfamilies and educators. One of the resources, [School Family Engagement with Grandfamilies in Mind](#), provides research-based strategies for educators engaging grandfamilies. Read more [here](#).

**U.S. Department of Education Resources**

The U.S. Department’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and Institute of Education Sciences (IES) developed “Effective and Engaging Instruction: Remote and In-Person”--resources to support educators. These resources include [Meaningful Online Education for Our Youngest Learners: Tips to Reconcile the Need for E-Learning with How Young Children Learn Best](#), [When Teachers and Students are Separated: Strategies from Research on Social Presence for Teaching at a Distance](#), and [Promising Practices Brief: Improving Student Engagement and](#)

[Attendance During COVID-19 School Closures](#). Similar resources are available at [OESE Resources](#), [OSEP Continuity of Learning During COVID-19](#), and [IES COVID-19 Evidence-Based Resources](#).

### **How School Leaders Shift Suicide Prevention to the Virtual World**

As many kids experience increased stress due to COVID-19 and racial inequity, experts recommend schools set up a suicide prevention task force to support student mental health. Having a specialized task force to focus on mental health can free up school staff for other challenges, such as online learning. Suicide prevention efforts should be tailored to students' developmental stage and culture, said Rich Lieberman, a lecturer in school psychology at Loyola Marymount University and former suicide prevention coordinator in Los Angeles public schools. Young children and teens have different needs, says Lieberman, as do students of color who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. A task force should also consider the needs of other groups at risk for suicide, such as LGBTQ students and those who have struggled with their mental health. Read more about preventing suicide in schools during COVID-19 [here](#).

### **SPRC Resources**

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) is excited to announce the launch of a new online tool, [Virtual Learning Lab: Care Transitions](#). This self-paced module can help ensure a support system, appropriate hand-off communication, and safety plan are in place when individuals at risk of suicide transition from inpatient to outpatient care. Designed for psychiatric hospital staff—such as social workers, clinical nurses, therapists, and discharge planners—this training is also applicable in other settings serving people at risk who will be discharged or transition to another treatment setting or level of care.

### **How to Talk to Children about Suicide: An Age-by-Age Guide**

Talking to kids about mental health and suicide can help them feel safe and supported. How should parents address these tough topics? Experts recommend considering their child's age. If a very young child asks about suicide, keep the answers simple. Let the child's questions guide the conversation and try not to give them more information than they need. "With any scary topic, we are going to give short, true answers and see if the child asks follow-up questions," said parenting expert Deborah Gilboa. For pre-teens, Gilboa suggests being more concrete and talking about the warning signs for suicide. Since high school students are more likely to know someone with mental health issues or struggle themselves, parents should talk about it openly and encourage help-seeking. Gilboa says parents of young adults should regularly check in with them about how they are doing, especially if they have lived experience of suicide. Read more [here](#) about guidelines for individual age groups

### **New Videos to Help You Talk with Children about Bullying**

StopBullying.gov's new animated video series is based on real experiences about bullying. Parents and guardians can watch these video stories with their children to prompt a discussion about bullying they've experienced or witnessed. They can ask questions such as:

- Have you witnessed any bullying like this?
- Who has been bullied? Have you ever bullied anyone?
- Have you ever been bullied?
- Why do you think the children who are bullying them (or you) are doing it?
- Do any adults know about the bullying incidents?
- What do you think can be done to stop it?

Adults can also share information with children about what they can do when they witness bullying or cyberbullying. Read more at [StopBullying.gov](#) or check out the videos on the [StopBullying.gov YouTube channel](#).

### **Why Chronic Absence Matters**

Across the country, more than 8 million students are missing so many days of school that they are academically at risk. Chronic absence — missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason—excused, unexcused absences and suspensions, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects and ninth-graders dropping out of high school. Go [here](#) to read this research summary from Attendance Works and learn what works to reduce chronic absence.

## **TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Webinar Series**

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders through the Lifespan: Behaviors & Strategies

January 6, 2021

12 p.m.-1 p.m.

Objectives:

- Identify 2 evidence-based interventions for children with an FASD.
- List 3 of the Eight Magic Keys.
- Describe 2 resources that are available for families living with FASD

Register [here](#).

### **Creating a Circle of Hope for Women and their Families**

Objectives:

- Examine how stigma is currently expressed towards women and families living with Alcohol Use Disorder/Substance Use Disorder
- Describe how to approach conversations with mothers around substance use or other substance exposures.
- Identify National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) resources for families living with addiction or FASD

March 3, 2021

12 p.m.-1 p.m.

Register [here](#).

### **School Mental Health Virtual Learning Series: Trauma Responsive Care for Younger Students**

January 6, 2021

3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Go [here](#) to register and to access recordings and slides from previous presentations in the series.

### **Truancy During COVID and Beyond**

January 7, 2021

7 p.m.-8 p.m.

Join Margie Wakelin from the Education Law Center to learn about PA's updated truancy law and the supports available to Families who are tackling the challenges of school attendance. Advisors from the PEAL Center and PA Parent and Family Alliance will be on hand to answer your questions about navigating school attendance challenges. Go [here](#) to register.

### **PA Care Partnership Speaker Series**

Ride the Wave with Gab Bonesso

January 14, 2021

2:30-4:00 p.m.

Read more and register [here](#).

Transforming Stigma, How to Become a Mental Wellness Superhero

January 21, 2021

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

Read more and register [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**

### **Mental Health Awareness Training Grants**

SAMHSA is accepting applications for the Mental Health Awareness Training grants (MHAT). The purpose of this program is to:

- Train individuals (e.g., school personnel, emergency first responders, law enforcement, veterans, armed services members and their families) to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental disorders, particularly serious mental illness (SMI) and/or serious emotional disturbances (SED)
- Establish linkages with school- and/or community-based mental health agencies to refer individuals with the signs or symptoms of mental illness to appropriate services
- Train emergency services personnel, law enforcement, fire department personnel, veterans, and others to identify persons with a mental disorder and employ crisis de-escalation techniques
- Educate individuals about resources that are available in the community for individuals with a mental disorder.
- It is expected that this program will prepare and train others on how to respond appropriately and safely to individuals with mental disorders, particularly individuals with SMI and/or SED.

SAMHSA plans to issue approximately 134 awards of up to \$125,000 per year for up to 5 years.

**Application Due Date: Friday, February 5, 2021.** Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Grants for Expansion and Sustainability of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS), is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2021 Grants for Expansion and Sustainability of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children with Serious Emotional Disturbances (Short title: System of Care (SOC) Expansion and Sustainability Grants). The purpose of this program is to improve the mental health outcomes for children and youth, birth through age 21, with serious emotional disturbances (SED), and their families. This program will support the implementation, expansion, and integration of the SOC approach by creating sustainable infrastructure and services that are required as part of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and their Families Program (also known as the Children's Mental Health Initiative or CMHI).

Eligibility for the grant is limited to public entities which refers to the following:

State governments and territories (i.e., the District of Columbia; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; the Northern Mariana Islands; the Virgin Islands; Guam; American Samoa; the Republic of Palau; the Federated States of Micronesia; and the Republic of the Marshall Islands);

Governmental units within political subdivisions of a state (e.g., county, city, town); or Federally recognized American Indian/Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations, as defined in Section 5304(b) and Section 5304(c) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

**Application due date is Friday, February 5, 2021.** Go [here](#) to access more information and application materials.

### **Enhancement and Expansion of Treatment and Recovery Services for Adolescents, Transitional Aged Youth, and their Families**

SAMHSA is accepting applications for Enhancement and Expansion of Treatment and Recovery Services for Adolescents, Transitional Aged Youth, and their Families grant program (Youth and Family TREE). The purpose of this program is to enhance and expand comprehensive treatment, early intervention, and recovery support services for adolescents (ages 12-18) and transitional aged youth (ages 16-25) with substance use disorders (SUD) and/or co-occurring substance use and mental disorders (COD), and their families/primary caregivers.

SAMHSA plans to issue approximately 17 awards of up to \$545,000 per year for up to 5 years. **Application Due Date: Monday, February 8, 2021.** Go [here](#) to read more.