

SAP CONNECTION

September, 2021

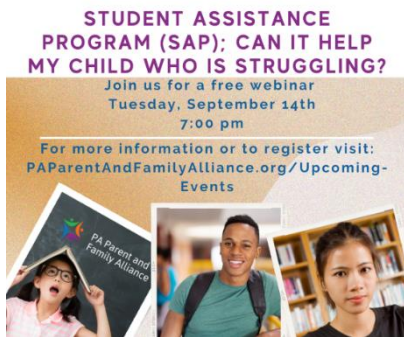


Prepared by: PA Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS)

www.pnsas.org

PNSAS INTERAGENCY UPDATE

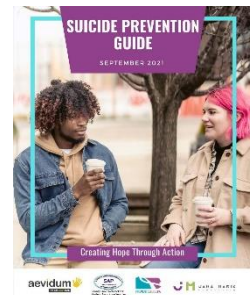
PNSAS/PA Parent and Family Alliance Webinar for Parents!



PNSAS and the PA Parent and Family Alliance present Student Assistance Program (SAP): Can it Help My Child Who Is Struggling? Hear directly from family members about their SAP experience: what went well and their suggestions for parents and SAP teams on enhancing the process. Join Dr. Perri Rosen and a panel of family members to learn how your local SAP team can help you and your child. The information provided will aid families, SAP teams, and providers as they collaborate throughout the SAP process. A time for questions and answers will be available. [Click here to register.](#)

September is National Suicide Prevention Month

The Jana Marie Foundation, Aavidum, Prevent Suicide PA, Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS), and Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Youth Suicide Prevention Grant are pleased to share a resource guide for communities for **National Suicide Prevention Month**. Within the month of September, the week of September 5th-11th is recognized as **National Suicide Prevention Week**, with Friday, September 10th marking **World Suicide Prevention Day**. This year's theme is "Creating Hope through Action." The [resource guide](#) provides examples of activities that you can implement in your organization or community to raise awareness of the importance of suicide prevention. This includes ideas for events, training, social media posts, virtual backgrounds, a sample proclamation, and more.



Relaunching of Drive Out Suicide!

Drive Out Suicide is a suicide prevention and awareness program created by Prevent Suicide PA. The program targets the average person with two messages: first, that help is available for people who are considering suicide, and second, that we can work together to decrease suicides in PA. Drive Out Suicide participants place suicide prevention magnets on their vehicles to raise awareness, and spread resources. To request a magnet, go to <http://pspahelp.com/request/>.

Suicide Prevention Night at the Ball Parks

Prevent Suicide PA (PSPA) and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) have partnered with the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Philadelphia Phillies for Suicide Prevention Night at the Ball Parks. The Pirates game is September 10, 2021 and the Phillies game is September 25, 2021. For ticket information go to <https://www.preventsuicidepa.org/2021sportspartners/>.

Prevent Suicide 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 will be announced on **Monday, September 20, 2021** and all submissions are due by **Wednesday, December 15, 2021**. Full contest information, including 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 the [website here](#). These are great resources to use during Suicide Prevention Month and throughout the year.

PA Youth Survey

Since 1989, the Commonwealth has conducted a survey of school students in the 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th grades to learn about their behavior, attitudes and knowledge concerning alcohol, tobacco, other drugs and violence. The Pennsylvania Youth Survey, or PAYS, is sponsored and conducted every two years by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

The data gathered in PAYS serves two primary needs. First, the results provide school administrators, state agency directors, legislators and others with critical information concerning the changes in patterns of the use and abuse of these harmful substances and behaviors. Second, the survey assesses risk factors that are related to these behaviors and the protective factors that help guard against them. This information allows community leaders to direct prevention resources to areas where they are likely to have the greatest impact.

The PAYS will be administered in the fall 2021. Questions were added to the survey, related to the impact of COVID and experiences with remote learning, for schools taking it online. Find a list of the schools that have registered to take the PAYS on the [2021 page](#) of the PAYS website. This list is updated in real time as schools complete the online registration form.

SAP BACK TO BASICS

READY....SET.... GO... BACK TO SCHOOL SAP TEAMS here we go!

In 2020 and 2021 how we educated our youth was ever changing. Will we be home? Will we be in person? Are we hybrid? It certainly has been difficult for us as adults, and definitely for our youth.

As we continue to deal with changes in our home and work lives, mental health and wellness is in the forefront of articles and discussions when looking at being prepared for the upcoming school year. Some schools are using recent funding to hire therapists, behavioral health workers, and other mental health professionals, which are needed. Making use of the current funding for staff additions, and planning for sustainability of those positions is a great first step, but we can't forget about what is already in place.

Through the pandemic, SAP team functioning varied depending on referrals, and capacity of staff and districts. While some teams functioned "as usual", others met less often or not at all, finding there were little to no student referrals being made to SAP. While that was happening in SAP, wait time to get assessments, and wait lists to get connected with treatment providers all increased. As we entered late spring and early summer, schools dismissed for the summer and a collective sigh occurred.

Summer gave many people a small amount of breathing time, but for many educators, discussions and planning continued, and decisions were made on how to help our students returning to schools that need assistance and support. Policies were written on vaccinations, wearing masks, cleanliness, etc.

It is hoped that the mental health and mental wellness of our students were included in all discussions and plans that were developed. There's no ultimate ready, set, go road map, for addressing all that will be encountered during this time. But what we do have in Pennsylvania is our Student Assistance teams.

Yes... this is a time for SAP teams and team members to be willing to help shape what mental wellness supports look like in our schools. This may include tutoring, afterschool activities, school counselor lessons, and groups, to name a few. We are at a time when we need to continue to brainstorm additional supports such as mentoring, a lunch support group, or more skill based groups based on our school community needs. It will take thought and time to identify and develop the additional in-house supports we need for students. Look inside your schools and communities and use data to develop and enhance what supports are already in place and what can be developed now. As you plan for development of new supports, think about sustainability.

So ... where do we begin....

SAP Team

- Take time in the initial meetings of the school year to review the SAP process in your building.
- Are your forms updated to address SAP referrals regardless of learning environment (e.g. in-person, virtual, hybrid)
- Are there lessons learned last year that can enhance how you implement SAP this year? (e.g. Did you use electronic signatures for parental permission for SAP referrals, did this work, how do you sustain this process now that you are in person.)
- Complete resource mapping on supports available in school to students.
- Are there gaps in supports that could be developed and used to support students?
- Prioritize these needs and make a plan to develop and implement.

SAP Liaison

- Assist the SAP teams with resource mapping.
- Help SAP teams to set up team maintenance to address areas of need.

SAP County Coordination meetings

- Schedule county meetings routinely.
- Expand your involvement of community resources to share at the meetings.
- Use the group to help develop resources that can offered to the schools to use.

Resources

Outside of the world of SAP, every day, we get more and more emails with information dealing with COV, trainings being offered, toolkits being developed to help. All of these resources have value.

As you read and learn more, share the resources with your SAP team members and school community.

Pennsylvania Department of Education:

- PDE YouTube videos: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3ESdgyRuTa9Wu62KGxT5lg>
- [Student and staff wellness guide](#)
- [Foster supportive learning](#)
- [Accelerated learning through an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [USDE Approves PA ARP ESSER State Plan](#)

PaTTAN: Behavior Bytes

- <https://www.pattan.net/Multi-Tiered-System-of-Suppor/Behavior/Behavior-Bytes>
- <https://www.pattan.net/Videos/Behavior-Bytes-Summer-2021-Anxiety>

Council of Chief State School Offices, CASEL, and American Institutes for Research

- [Working Together: Social and Emotional Learning and a Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)
- [SEL MTSS Toolkit for State and District Leaders](#)

New America and Education Council

- [A Toolkit for Effective and Supportive Transitions for Children, Families, and Educators in Fall 2021 and Beyond](#)

The Safer Schools and Campuses Best Practices Clearinghouse

- [Reopening safely resources](#)

American School Counselor Association (staff wellness is included in these documents)

- [School Reentry, the School Counselor's Role](#)
- [ASCA/NASP \(joint document\): School Reentry Considerations](#)

National Education Association

- [Educating through Crisis](#)

RESOURCES and NEWS

COVID-19 Pandemic: Helping Young Children and Parents Transition Back to School

Transitioning back to early childhood programs or school— or starting them for the first time—can create extra challenges during a pandemic. Learn what parents and teachers can do to help children make a successful transition to in-person learning and care. Listen to the CDC podcast or download the transcript [here](#).

Return to School Roadmap

On August 2, the US Department of Education released the “Return to School Roadmap,” a resource to support students, schools, educators, and communities as they prepare to return to safe, healthy, in-person learning this fall and emerge from the pandemic stronger than before. As part of the launch of the Roadmap, the Department released:

A [fact sheet](#) for schools, families, and communities

A [guide](#) for schools and districts outlining what schools can do to protect the health and safety of students

A [checklist](#) that parents can use to prepare themselves and their children for a safe return to in-person learning this fall

Visit <https://madetosave.org/back-to-school/> to read about the week of action's mobilization efforts.

SAMHSA Expands its Talk. They Hear You.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has released 15 new print Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Each PSA encourages parents and educators to talk to their children and students about alcohol and other substances. See the new PSAs [here](#).

Brain Research: A Focus on Childhood Trauma and Alcohol Misuse

News reports of college drinking tragedies, and concerns about increased access to alcohol in the home during the pandemic, make clear that COVID-19 has provided no reprieve from the problems of underage drinking. A perennial public health priority, alcohol misuse by young people increases the likelihood of myriad serious consequences, including altered brain development, academic problems, unsafe sexual behavior, physical and sexual assault, traffic crashes, injuries, overdoses, and alcohol use disorder (AUD).

Recent and ongoing studies supported by The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) indicate that investigations of the relationship between childhood trauma and alcohol misuse, and the neural substrates through which that relationship is mediated, will provide important avenues for continued progress against underage drinking, its

subsequent problems, and their potential treatment. Many of these studies include examination of emotional stress and mental health problems, such as [post-traumatic stress disorder \(PTSD\)](#), that frequently co-occur with AUD. [Click here to read more.](#)

What to Do If You Are Concerned About Your Teen's Mental Health

The Jed Foundation has released a guide to help parents and families who are concerned about their teen's mental health and emotional well-being have important conversations with their child. This guide covers the following topics: signs that your teen may be struggling, preparing yourself emotionally to have the conversations, what to say and do during the conversation and more. [Download the guide here.](#)

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

2021-2022 SAP K-12 Training Schedule

Looking for SAP training to add new SAP team members? Check out the training calendar on the PNSAS website. Several SAP Trainers offer the training virtually if that fits your schedule. [Click here for training dates.](#)

Suicide Prevention Online Learning Center

Developed by Prevention Suicide PA and the Pennsylvania Garrett Lee Smith Youth Suicide Prevention Grant team the Suicide Prevention On Line Learning Center is designed to provide research-based and best practice information to anyone who may come into contact with individuals struggling with suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Courses Available:

- **(New)** Concussions, Depression, and Suicidal Risk: Assessment and Clinical Management
- **(New)** School and Community-Based Prevention Interventions to Prevent Adolescent Suicide
- **(New)** An Introduction to Attachment-Based Family Therapy for Suicidal Adolescents
- **(New)** Managing Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Teens
- Youth Suicide Prevention for Educators Course
- Developing Effective Safety Plans for Suicidal Youth
- Method Restriction: Primary Care and Public Health Approaches
- Pharmacotherapy of Pediatric Anxiety and Depression

And more! To view all of the courses offered, please visit the Suicide Prevention Online Learning Center here: <https://pspalearning.com>

Center for Safe Schools: Third Thursday Online Learning Series

The 2021 Third Thursday digital learning series, which runs through November and is free to attend, will educate those new to the bullying prevention field and sharpen the skills of those who are experienced in this vital area. Webinars will cover essential topics including student safety and well-being skills, social-emotional wellness, cyberspace, and more.

[Go to Third Thursday Series](#)

The Pennsylvania Care Partnership: offers trainings and webinars throughout the year. [Check them out](#) for this year's events.

GRANTS

Grants for Children of Post-9/11 Combat Veterans

[Our Military Kids](#) is providing grants of up to \$300 for the [support of military children](#) (age 3-18) to fund sports, arts, and other enrichment activities when their parents are deployed overseas or are recovering from severe injuries sustained in a post-9/11 overseas mission. Participation in these activities helps military children cope with stress and build self-confidence

during these difficult times. Learn more about the application process and requirements by visiting the [Our Military Kids website](#).

Kars4Kids Small Grant Program

Kars4Kids is dedicated to helping children develop into productive members of their communities.

To that end, the organization's small grant program supports educational initiatives and youth development programs in North America with grants ranging from \$500 to \$2000. The program is especially interested in encouraging continued education outside of school and empowering future citizens and leaders of the community. Fundable activities include libraries, afterschool programs, mentoring, exercise programs, weekend programming, incentives for continued reading and math work, and anti-bullying initiatives. Click [here](#) for more information and application instructions.