



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
PA Network for Student Assistance Services
Departments of Education, Health, and Public Welfare

Regional Youth Suicide Prevention Workshops with Task Force
and Community Members

The Student Assistance Program and Youth Suicide Prevention



Objectives:

- Overview of the Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program
- Connection between SAP and Youth Suicide Prevention

What is the Student Assistance Program?



- Multidisciplinary school-based program
- Students K-12
- Identifies students who are experiencing behavioral and/or academic difficulties, which pose a barrier to learning and academic success
- SAP does not diagnose
- It is not a treatment program

The SAP Process



1. Referral and Parent Contact
2. Team Planning Meeting
3. Intervention and Recommendations (in-school and out of school)
4. Support and Follow-Up

Authorization of SAP in Schools



- **Act 211** of 1990: Drug and Alcohol Education, Counseling and Support Services and the corresponding **B.E.C.**
- **Chapter 12** of school code [§12.42] Student Assistance Program
- **School Board** (established team, adopted policies incorporating SAP)
- Written **Letters of Agreement** with agencies

SAP Core Team



The core of the Student Assistance Program is a professionally trained, multidisciplinary team including:

- School Staff: administrator, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, teachers, special educators, etc.
- Liaisons from Community Agencies: Drug/Alcohol and Mental Health professionals (and in some areas a school-based probation officer) who attend SAP meetings, provide consultation at team meetings, as well as services to students.

Parent Involvement



- Parents are notified of a student's referral to the SAP team
- Parents must give written permission for SAP team involvement
- Parents are encouraged to work closely with the team to address issues that are within the scope of the school's responsibility.

Community/Agency Involvement



- When the barrier is beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team provides
- Linkages to resources within the community
 - Support during and after community treatment

Commonwealth of PA Involvement



The Student Assistance Program of Pennsylvania is a collaborative between:

- PA Department of Education: Division of School Options and Safety
- PA Department of Public Welfare: Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- PA Department of Health: Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs

PA Network for Student Assistance Services



- SAP Interagency Committee
- SAP Regional Coordinators
- SAP Statewide Staff
- SAP Commonwealth Approved Training System
- SAP County Coordination Teams/
District Councils

PA SAP Highlights



1987-88

- Commonwealth SAP Interagency Committee formally established with PDE, DPW and DOH
- Group Facilitators Training conducted statewide
- Commonwealth Approved Training Provider system established for SAP

1989-90

- SAP guidelines developed for schools
- PA Association for Student Assistance Professionals (PASAP) established

1990-91

- Act 211 signed by Governor Casey
- SAP incorporated into Instructional Support Teams (IST) at the elementary level – training conducted
- 499 school districts have trained SAP teams

PA SAP HIGHLIGHTS



1997-98

- Department of Public Welfare, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, issued minimum guidelines for county mental health programs

1998-99

- Evaluation of SAP in Pennsylvania conducted by University of Pittsburgh
- Desk Reference Manual developed for SAP Teams
- Parent Involvement training conducted statewide

1999-2000

- Commonwealth Approved Training Provider System expanded
- Resiliency training offered statewide

Reporting on SAP Programs in PA



1986

- PA Dept. of Education implemented collection of data on SAP referrals from school districts (PDE 4092)

1988

- SAP Online Reporting System developed for the PDE 4092

2002-03

- System updated to allow reporting of elementary SAP data on PDE 4092

Data Collection (PDE 4092)



- Reported through www.safeschools.state.pa.us by core teams
- Reviewed and released by school district zone administrator
- County and state reports are accessible by the general public
- District and school-level reports are accessible only through password-protected accounts

20 Years of SAP School Reporting (PDE 4092)



- Since 1988 more than 1,167,500 referrals
- Two **most prevalent referral sources** are:
 - Teacher referrals – approximately **417,505**
 - School Counselor referrals – approx. **223, 935**
- Recorded **Self** Referrals – **90,939**
- Recorded **Parent** Referrals – **119,894**

20 Years of SAP School Reporting (PDE 4092)



- Three **most common** referral reasons
 - Behavior concerns: 559,648
 - Policy violations: 252,335
 - Attendance problems: 138,519
- Students referred by teams for assessment by
 - Licensed Mental Health Provider: 241,608
 - Licensed Drug and Alcohol Provider: 137,286
- Referrals for Suicidal Ideation/Gesture
 - 63,205
 - Data will not reflect students who were actively suicidal and were referred directly for treatment per school district's Crisis Policy

Data Collection (County MH/MR and SCA Liaison Reports)



- Joint quarterly reporting began in 2009
- Reported through www.sap.state.pa.us by SAP liaison provider agencies
- Reports submitted for each school building/districts
- Reviewed by county MH/MR and SCA administrators
- Accessible only through password-protected accounts

SAP Liaison Reporting 2009-2010



- Total number of student referred which have received an assessment during this reporting period: 22949
- Number of students referred that received a Drug and Alcohol assessment during this reporting period: 4240
- Number of students referred that received a Mental Health assessment during this reporting period: 13641
- Number of students referred that received a CoOccurring assessment during this reporting period: 5068

SAP Liaison Reporting 2009-2010



REFERRAL OUTCOMES

- Total number of students who were admitted to at least one of the Intervention or Treatment options: 16406
- Total number of core team consultations that the liaisons participated in this reporting period: 42114
- Total number of parent teacher consultations that the liaisons participated in this reporting period: 42535

SAP and PA Youth Suicide Prevention Plan



In 2001 the SAP Interagency Committee of took the lead in convening a workgroup of about 50 stakeholders from across the Commonwealth to expand and formalize a youth suicide prevention plan.

**PENNSYLVANIA'S
YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION
5 YEAR ACTION PLAN**



- **Goal 1:** Promote Awareness that Youth Suicide is a Public Health Problem that is Preventable
- **Goal 2:** Develop Broad-based Support for Youth Suicide Prevention
- **Goal 3:** Develop and Implement Strategies to Reduce the Stigma Associated with Being a Youth Consumer of Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Suicide Prevention Services
- **Goal 4:** Identify, Develop, and Implement Youth Suicide Prevention Programs

**PENNSYLVANIA'S
YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION
5 YEAR ACTION PLAN**



- **Goal 5:** Promote Efforts to Reduce Access to Lethal Means and Methods of Self-Harm
- **Goal 6:** Implement Training for Recognition of At-Risk Behavior and Delivery of Effective Treatment
- **Goal 7:** Develop and Promote Effective Clinical and Professional Practices
- **Goal 8:** Improve Access to and Community Linkages with Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

PENNSYLVANIA'S YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION 5 YEAR ACTION PLAN



- **Goal 9:** Improve Reporting and Portrayals of Suicidal Behavior, Mental Illness, and Substance Abuse in the Entertainment and News Media
- **Goal 10:** Promote and Support Research on Youth Suicide and Youth Suicide Prevention
- **Goal 11:** Improve and Expand Surveillance Systems

SAP: Reaching One Child At a Time



An 11th grade student was referred to the school's SAP team due to a drop in grades and periodic thoughts of suicide.

The MH liaison met with the student and learned that the person's home life was chaotic. Several siblings were involved in the legal system and a parent was alcoholic.

SAP: Reaching One Child At a Time



The liaison referred the student for an assessment for outpatient mental health treatment. By the end of the senior year, this student developed an anti-tobacco program for youth and applied for and received the Masonic SAP scholarship. Currently, this individual is completing a Master's Degree in Social Work.

SAP: Reaching One Child At a Time



“ . . .the beauty of SAP was that the teachers were attuned to the fact that for a student like this, a moderate drop in grades was significant.

What SAP really brings to our youth is the awakening of the adults around them. . .their parents, teachers and whomever else truly looks and sees the manner in which our kids struggle. SAP helps that to happen, one child at a time.”

-A Commonwealth Approved Trainer
and former SAP liaison

SAP and Youth Suicide Prevention Task Forces Making the Connection



Opportunities for Collaboration

- District SAP Team Coordinator/Contact
- SAP County Coordination
- SAP Regional Coordinator
- Direct Referrals

SAP WEBSITE



Website
www.sap.state.pa.us