

Centre County Student Assistance Programs

AN OVERVIEW FOR PARENTS

Developed by the Centre County
SAP District Council

WHAT IS A STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

A Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to help school personnel to identify issues; including alcohol, drugs, mental health and behavioral concerns; which pose a barrier to a student's learning and school success.

The SAP uses a systematic process, along with specially trained school personnel, to intervene and refer these students to appropriate in-school and/or community services. Parent involvement is an important part of the process.

WHY DO SCHOOLS HAVE SAP TEAMS?

All school districts in Pennsylvania are required to establish and maintain a program to provide appropriate referrals for counseling and support services for students who experience difficulties in school. The program has been in existence since 1985 and has been maintained as a cooperative effort between the Pennsylvania Departments of Education, Health, and Public Welfare. Approximately 65,000 students in Pennsylvania are referred to SAP core teams in schools every year.

However, not all teams in schools are called the "Student Assistance Program." In Centre County, teams are also called BEST, STAR, SAT, and PASS.



WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Change in behavior or mood: easily upset, sad, angry, unpredictable, secretive, etc.
- Drop in grades or school performance: skipping school, not completing homework, etc.
- Change in friends, appearance, or interests.
- Physical symptoms: fatigue, weight loss/gain, change in sleep patterns, headaches, etc.
- Defiance of rules: refusing to do chores, coming home late, avoiding family, taking money, etc.
- Alcohol or other drug use, no matter how minimal, or misuse of medications.



Helping Students Stay On Track
Student Assistance Program

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS:

- Become informed about issues that are affecting our children today such as alcohol and other drugs, suicide, depression, and violence.
- Attend meetings and return calls/ letters regarding your child.
- Be open and honest with the team regarding your concerns or fears. Give them the opportunity to assist your child.
- Don't enable. Enabling is when parents and adults unknowingly allow irresponsible or harmful behaviors to continue. Some examples: giving one more chance after a rule was broken, lying or making excuses for the child, ignoring unacceptable behaviors, promising not to tell, making deals, or blaming others.
- Follow through promptly with recommendations from the school and/or agency staff.
- Ask your school about parent/student rights and responsibilities.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN SAP?

The core of the program is a team trained according to state guidelines. Members of the team may include teachers, principals, nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, and representatives from human service agencies. The Student Assistance Program is a support service for students and families. All information regarding a student's involvement in the program is confidential and maintained in the best interest of the student.

WHAT IS THE SAP PROCESS?

Students may be referred for many reasons including violating the district's drug and alcohol policy, exhibiting signs of mental health problems (including the risk of suicide), behavior concerns, or change in school performance. Students may be referred to SAP by school personnel, parents, friends, themselves or others.

The SAP team reviews all referrals, and an information-gathering process begins. Information about the student's academic performance, attendance, behaviors, and other concerns is requested from school staff. If this information indicates a concern, schools in most cases will inform parents. Parents in turn may provide information which is helpful to the team.

The family and the SAP team work together to develop a plan based upon the student's needs. This plan may include an assessment by a drug/alcohol or mental health professional. The SAP team does not diagnose or provide treatment.

WHAT IS THE PARENT'S ROLE?

Parent support of the Student Assistance Program process is necessary for student success. Students are more likely to benefit from SAP recommendations and school/agency services when parents are informed, involved, and supportive.

School and Community Resources

For more information, contact these numbers:

Bald Eagle Area Middle/Senior High School
B.E.S.S.T. (Bald Eagle Student Support Team)
Contact Person: Carol Tancibok
814-355-4629

Bellefonte Area Middle School
Student Assistance Team
Contact Person: Guidance Office
814-355-5466 ext. 5006

Bellefonte Area High School
Student Assistance Team
Contact Person: Guidance Office
814-355-4833

Penns Valley Junior-Senior High School
PASS Team
(Program Assisting Student Success)
Contact Person: Guidance Office
814-422-8854

Philipsburg-Osceola Area Junior High School
STAR Team
Contact Person: Guidance Office
814-342-4860

Philipsburg-Osceola Area Senior High School
STAR Team
Contact Person: Guidance Office
814-342-1523

Park Forest Middle School
(State College)
Student Assistance Program
Contact: Counseling Center
814-237-5304

RIT Program (State College)
Student Assistance Program
814-235-6351

Mount Nittany Middle School (State College)
Student Assistance Program
Contact: Counseling Center
814-466-5141

State College High School South
Student Assistance Program
Contact: Counseling Center
814-231-5050

State College High School North
Student Assistance Program
Contact: Counseling Center
814-231-1130

Delta Program (State College)
Student Assistance Program
Contact Person: Delta Counselor
814-231-1000

Centre County Mental Health/Mental Retardation and
Drug/Alcohol Program
420 Holmes Street
Willowbank Office Building
Bellefonte, PA 16823
Contact Person: Cathy Arbogast
(Drug and Alcohol)
814-355-6744
Julie Segal (Mental Health)
814-355-6782

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