Pennsylvania Network for Student Assistance Services (PNSAS)

Best Practice Guidelines for Drug & Alcohol/Mental Health Liaison Services

Introduction

Pennsylvania's Student Assistance Program (SAP) utilizes a systematic team process, comprised of professionals from various disciplines within the school, and liaisons from community agencies. These selected professionals are trained to identify nonacademic barriers to learning, and in collaboration with families, to strategize and/or refer identified students for assistance that will enhance their school success. As representatives of the county drug and alcohol and mental health systems, professionally trained liaisons provide consultation to teams and families regarding community and/or school-based screenings/assessments, and other services for drug and alcohol and/or mental health related concerns.

These best practice guidelines are applicable to Single County Authorities (SCA), Mental Health Administrators, Mental Health (MH) and Drug and Alcohol (D&A) direct service staff and contracted SAP agencies/providers for effective delivery of SAP liaison services to student assistance teams in a county/joinder. While this document outlines best practice for the operation of a successful SAP program, agencies should reference the respective agency guidelines that outline the provision of SAP services.

Best Practice Guidelines for SCA's and County Mental Health Programs in the Implementation of SAP Liaison Services

1. Contract with/provide and monitor local providers for effective delivery of SAP services to Student Assistance Program teams in the county/county-joinder as outlined in the guidelines for SAP liaison services.

2. Contracts with providers include on-site consultation services to SAP teams within the individual county/county joinder area.

3. Schools without the essential elements of an effective SAP team may be omitted from liaison services and reported to your PNSAS Regional Coordinator for technical assistance.

4. Be knowledgeable about the Student Assistance Program best practices.

5. Ensure letters of agreement pertaining to the provision of SAP services are executed and in effect. These Letters of Agreement (LOA) should be negotiated annually, and need to be signed by the D&A and MH providers, school district representative, and when applicable the SCA

and/ or MH administrators. A copy of this LOA should be on file with the SCA and County MH offices.

At a minimum, the letter of agreement should include the following:

- ➢ a designated contact person for the school and agency
- ➢ the frequency of attendance for liaisons at SAP team meetings
- ➢ the role of the liaisons in the school SAP process
- ➢ referral procedures
- ➢ school and agency responsibilities and expectations
- ➢ a list of services to be provided and their accompanying cost, if any, to the school
- ➢ record-keeping requirements
- ➢ a procedure for conflict resolution
- ➢ applicable confidentiality requirements

6. Monitor services provided annually for adherence to best practices.

7. Establish a system of regular communication with all stakeholders.

8. Collaborate with PNSAS.

9. Utilize state, county, SAP, and other relevant data available for annual planning and program improvement purposes.

10. Submit all required reports to the appropriate agencies. This could include but is not limited to: a summary of the SAP liaison services provided, the number and demographics of students served, aggregate data on the primary issues identified via screenings conducted, completion of Joint Quarterly Reporting System and Department of Drug & Alcohol Programs prevention data system reporting.

Guidelines for Drug and Alcohol and Mental Health SAP Liaison Services on SAP Teams

1. The agency/provider shall assign properly credentialed staff to serve as system liaison(s) to student assistance teams. When one person functions as liaison for both the drug and alcohol and mental health service systems, that person should have knowledge, skills, and appropriate supervision in each discipline.

2. Regularly scheduled supervision of the liaisons will be provided by staff knowledgeable about SAP in schools and the local service system.

3. Liaisons will be trained and receive certification from an approved PNSAS SAP Trainer in the mandatory K-12 SAP Training and attend professional development webinars as offered by PNSAS.

4. Liaison's responsibilities may include the following:
   - attending team meetings as outlined in the letter of agreement
   - all drug and alcohol SAP liaisons shall attend the 6-hour DDAP-approved, or Pennsylvania Certification Board-approved, Confidentiality Training
   - providing consultation services as requested (e.g., attends meetings with parents and school official)
   - participating in the planning of county coordination/district council meetings
   - participating in team maintenance sessions with SAP teams
   - participating in program evaluation activities with core team members
   - facilitating and supporting the school-based aftercare plans for students who are returning to school from treatment
   - facilitating or co-facilitating school-based support groups
   - maintaining data for required reporting as determined by the local SCA and / or Mental Health Administration
   - providing relevant training to students, parents, faculty and staff, including the marketing of SAP and SAP services
   - assisting the school with stakeholder in-service (i.e., school board, parents, school staff, community members, etc.)
   - collaborating with other agency providers
   - providing student screenings and conducting level of care assessments when appropriately credentialed and trained to perform the task
   - assisting students and their parents in the referral to and access of appropriate services
   - additional duties as outlined in letter of agreement

5. Liaisons should have a knowledge and skill set in the following areas:

Collaboration and Consultation	- collaboration and working with families, students, school personnel, and agency personnel - conflict resolution and problem solving - consulting with school personnel and families in "crisis" situations - understanding cultural diversity and its role in working with students and families - procedures for accessing local resources for students and families - intervention techniques and strategies
Facilitation	team facilitation

	➤ facilitating access to local resources ➤ facilitation of psycho-educational groups ➤ continuity of care planning
Information, Intervention and Referral	➤ providing screenings/assessments to identify a student's needs ➤ suicide prevention and intervention techniques ➤ local child-serving systems and services ➤ school crisis intervention and support services ➤ current trends (i.e., Drug & Alcohol/ MH) ➤ risk and protective factors ➤ evidence based prevention programs ➤ typical/atypical child and adolescent behavior
Laws, regulations, policies	➤ Applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, school policies and procedures, and current best practices related to SAP ➤ Ethics ➤ SAP standards and competencies ➤ School-safety issues (e.g., bullying, hazing, harassment, discrimination, violence, morals offenses, etc.) ➤ District protocol; related to intervention, support, and postvention

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