



THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS AND HOW IT WORKS

The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systemic team process used to identify and address issues and mobilize school resources to **remove barriers that impede learning success**. SAP teams consist of different staff members of the school along with mental health and drug and alcohol liaisons. The SAP process is confidential. It is a collaborative initiative of the Departments of Education, Public Welfare and Health.

SAP originated in the 1980's when the Department of Education piloted the program in an attempt to respond to the growing number of adolescent suicides in Pennsylvania.

The focus grew to include mental health issues and addiction problems. Student success rates improved when these areas of concern were addressed and linked with appropriate resources through referral. Therefore the **primary focus** of attention is on those **students** who are **at high risk for academic failure**. Parents or caregivers are an integral part of the process as well. **Parents' consent** and **involvement** in the process is **critical** to the entire process. The team takes into consideration the family system as well as the natural supports at the school involved with the student to aid or assist with his/her success.

The program is able to provide short term interventions with the student and family. If the issue is beyond this scope it then moves toward providing the parent/s and the student with information so they may access services in the community.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL.....

There are many reasons for referral, some of which may include the following:

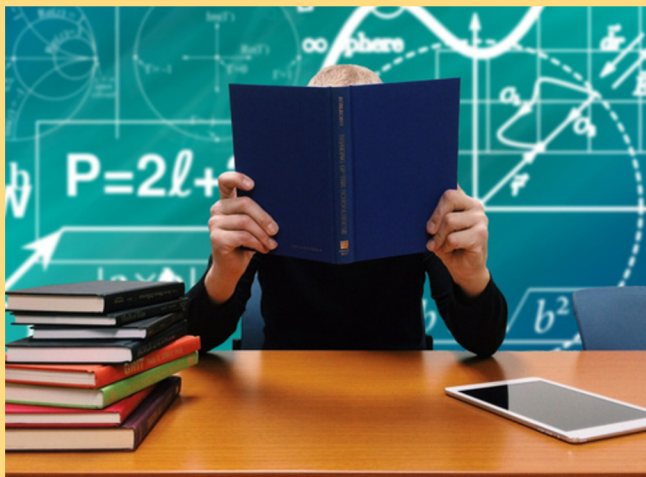
- Mild/Serious Behavioral Problems
- Depression
- School Refusal
- Truancy
- Grief and Loss
- Self Mutilation
- Family Problems
- Suicidal Ideation
- Conflict Resolution (Between teachers, peers, family members, etc.)
- Poor Academics
- Anger Management
- Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Bullying





THE REFERRAL PROCESS

- Referral to SAP Program can be made by teachers, parents, students or concerned school staff.
- SAP Team meets to discuss referral and plan of action is made regarding next steps - send out forms to teachers and/or phone call to parent.
- Interventions and recommendations are made.
- Support and follow-up are provided.



SOME AVAILABLE RESOURCES:

- Contact school or school district
- Children's Service Center 570-825-6425
- Helpline: 570-829-1341
- Talkline: 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: text "PA" to 741741
- Lifeline: 1-800-SUICIDE

A strength-based approach, looks like this ->

The Cracked Pot

Once upon a time there was a water-bearer in India who had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his shoulder or neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house. The cracked pot arrived only half full.

For two full years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water in his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water-bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I hate that, for the last two years, I have only delivered half of my load because of this crack in my side. It causes the water to leak out all the way back to the master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work and do not get full value from your efforts", the pot said.

The water-bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot and in his compassion he said, "as we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half of its load and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not the other pot's side?"

That's because I have always known about the flaw and took advantage of it and planted flower seeds on your side of the path and everyday while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.

