

**Children's Service Center
Student Assistance Program
Luzerne/Wyoming Counties**

Introduction:

In the 2015-2016; Children's Service Center **Student Assistance Program** workers have interfaced with staff at 22 different schools and offered preventative services to 567 unduplicated children. In the school year January 1, 2017 to June 30, 2017 Children's Service Center projects serving 287 students and July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 Children's Service Center projects serving 575 students.

CSC's Plan for development of a resiliency oriented system:

System Indictors:

1. Affirmative Action hiring policy that supports accommodations:
Children's Service Center's hiring policy is one of affirmative action; in addition, our HR department has an established track record of providing accommodations for staff that request them, both for physical as well as mental health needs.
2. Resiliency oriented mission statement:
Children's Service Center continues to review our mission statement to ensure a resiliency oriented mission statement drives our services.
3. Board Representation:
Children's Service Center is proud that consumers have representation on our Board. A significant officer on our Board of Directors is a consumer of services here at CSC. We are planning to increase consumer participation on our Board.

1. Soundness of Approach

A. Project Description:

Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues, including problems with alcohol and drugs that pose a barrier to a student's learning and success in school. SAP is a systematic process using effective, accountable professional techniques to rally school resources to remove barriers to learning and where the problem is beyond the scope of the school, to assist the parent and the student with the information so they may access services in the community. Parents' involvement in the process is considered critical to the

entire process. SAP is a collaborative initiative of the Departments of Education, Public Welfare and Health.

- ❖ In Luzerne and Wyoming Counties, each middle school and high school has a SAP team of *trained* professionals, representing the school. In some districts we have expanded service to elementary school teams. These teams are made up of administrators, guidance counselors, nurses, home/school visitors, school resource officers and faculty. Included on the team is a master's level clinician representing the mental health system for children and adolescents. There is also a drug and alcohol specialist on the team. This SAP team meets weekly, sometimes bi-weekly, to discuss students referred to the team for assistance. Teachers, parents or other students may refer the student to the team. Children's Service Center, as designated by the county, provides two mental health liaisons to serve on a total of 22 schools in Luzerne and Wyoming County. This mental health liaison provides a variety of services to each school. Their involvement includes: prevention services, assessment of students, early referral to services in or out of school, or both, providing supportive counseling as needed, provide supportive help to crisis situations in schools, case management, collaborative with other agencies that serve schools. The mental health services in whatever capacity is needed to insure children and adolescents are helped in a timely and professional way. The Mental Health Liaison on the SAP team is also involved in providing educational information on MH issues to the SAP teams in each school.

B. Description of Target Population:

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is concerned with adolescents in junior and senior high school and in some districts the addition of elementary school students. The Pennsylvania Department of Education is encouraging involvement in the elementary schools for the SAP Program. Some Elementary schools have begun to train personnel to serve on SAP teams. This movement to include elementary students may increase the responsibility of the MH liaison in the coming years. However, the primary focus of attention is on **students who are at high risk for academic failure**. *It is understood that there is an intricate connection between how a student performs in school and their emotional health and well being.* Therefore, our focus is working with all issues that adolescents encounter in their school and home. It is an important part of the process that the parents/caregivers are involved as well. Thus we target the entire family of this population. We also target teachers and other school personnel.

C. Statement of Need:

The Student Assistance Program addresses the multitude of issues a child or adolescent encounter and how these issues impact on the educational progress of the student. Schools are deeply involved in working collaboratively with all

community agencies, but in particular with the Psychological/Emotional needs of students. Children's Service Center has and continues to be an important partner with the school in addressing the needs of students. Some of the critical issues that are addressed are:

- 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
- Trauma
- Violence in school or community

Referral Process:

1. Referral to SAP Program (teachers, parents, students can refer a student).
2. Team Planning-team meets, discusses referral, plan is made as to what action is taken next (send out forms to teachers or phone call to parent)
3. Interventions and Recommendations are made
4. Support and Follow-up

It is important to note that SAP seeks to help with the needs that are brought to their attention. The mental health worker works in close collaboration with the resources of the school to insure needs are addressed. Resources within and outside the school are utilized as needed. Schools are continually seeing an on going vital need for services provided by this prevention service.

D. Project Outcomes:

The mental health liaisons serve on the SAP teams of the following schools that serve students from Luzerne/Wyoming Counties:

Coughlin High School
Meyers High School

A vital part of the role of SAP is prevention. We have been able to prevent problems from escalating, prevent and educate families and students as to what they can do now to prevent deeper, more serious problems at home or in school. Schools are proud of what SAP has been able to do in assisting them in really helping students to succeed. SAP has been able to achieve a credible partnership with schools. A survey of the school personnel indicated that the schools have been and continue to be pleased with services available to them with SAP, but most specifically with the role of the MH liaison. We are entrusted with their confidence and support. We have also been able to work within the school system to prevent students from entering the MH system. The issues and problems have been able to be resolved with better communication and conflict resolution. The role as case manager has also served to connect students and families to other resources as needed. In 2005-2006, of the 372 students, 80% did not need additional services beyond the SAP intervention. 10% received school guidance or other school related services, and 10% of the students were referred to community based mental health and drug and alcohol programs. In 2006-2007, 88% of students did not need additional services beyond the SAP intervention. 9% were referred to community based mental health and drug and alcohol programs and 3% received school guidance or other school related services. 99% of students referred did not need to be placed in residential or hospitalization placements. In 2009-2010, 85% did not need additional services beyond the SAP intervention. 10% were referred to community based mental health and drug services. 98% did not need to be placed in residential or hospitalization placements. In 2011-2012, again 98% did not need residential or hospitalization placements. In the 2012-2013 school year 95 % did not need residential or hospitalization placements. In the 2013-2014 school year 98% did not need residential or hospitalization. In the 2014-2015 school year 98% did not need residential or hospitalization. In school year 2015-2016 99% did not need residential or hospitalization.

Ten years ago, Wilkes-Barre Area School District partnered with the SAP program to work on a Pilot Project called SOS-Signs of Suicide. This program is geared to identify students at risk for suicidal behavior, therefore to prevent it before it happens. This program has now become a regular program that both SAP and Wilkes-Barre Area School District provides to all 8th grade students. This program is done in the fall. All 8th grade students are given the opportunity to participate with parental permission. This program identifies students who are at risk for suicide and they are assessed and referred if needed. In the fall 2012, 600 students were given a brief survey screening for adolescents at risk for suicidal ideation and/or attempts. The Students identified to be at risk met immediately with a member of the mental health staff. Dependent upon each individual case, students were then referred to guidance for follow-up support, referred to counseling services as necessary, and/or immediately prompted to seek mobile crisis services. All evaluations and results were passed on to the guidance department of each school. Out of the 600 students, 40 students met with a mental health liaison. In the fall of 2013, the district asked us to evaluate only one school, therefore there were 140 students evaluated, 25 students met with a mental health

liaison. In the fall of 2014, the district held the SOS project in 3 Wilkes-Barre schools, 29 students met with a mental health liaison. In 2015, 3 schools participated where 53 students met with a mental health liaison.

The SAP mental health liaisons are also members of the community crisis teams of CSC. These teams are called upon to offer post-vention services to schools in the event of a tragic incident that may occur in the school or community. During the 2015-2016 school year the MH liaison was asked to speak to students, parents, and other various groups on the issues of bullying, suicide, and grief counseling due to death of a student or school personal.

E. Potential for Success:

The overall picture of the SAP program and specifically the MH liaison presents a view that can lead to more students and parents being helped to obtain assistance within the context of the school environment. Working collaboratively with school staff and other agencies that serve the school community allows a better continuum of care and services. We work from the principle of seeing the student's strengths (**resiliency**) and building from there to work toward helping the student to be successful in school. This program enables the schools to utilize the MH services to help students and families. This service provides professional assistance to the school teams enabling them to aid students with better emotional health. It is a valuable resource to schools, students and families.

There are no rejections to the SAP program. Any referrals received are seen. SAP liaisons are also working together with the agency to increase productivity by having the SAP liaison's complete clinical intake assessments; therefore, reducing the time it will take for a student to be seen as well as making services more accessible to families.

As stated earlier, it is important to note that SAP seeks to help those with needs that are brought to their attention. We have been working with school officials to increase the awareness of the SAP team and their functions by speaking at teacher in-services. We are attempting to make more awareness to the faculty. Through this we are able to offer suggestions and recommendations about how to help decrease truancy, depression, as well as drug and alcohol use among students. We work with the districts we serve to set up assemblies to talk with the students and introduce all members of the SAP team as well as how the referral process works. Students are often a great referral source when they know something is going on with their friends.

Truancy continues to be an issue that schools are facing. 97% of SAP referrals are not due to truancy. However, when we receive a truancy referral, we refer the student and family to Children's Service Center's Family Functional Therapy Program.

“Truancy is a process, not an event” (Maureen Lucas, CSN, MSN, 2008). Therefore, the SAP team is referred students who are identified as “high risk” prior to truancy becoming an issue. In the State of Pennsylvania, 80% of students who were referred to SAP teams have an increase in classroom attendance (Dr. Robert Gillio, Innerlink, Inc. 2008). The MH liaisons works in collaboration with the schools on addressing truancy issues.

An area of great concern in schools today is the issue of Bullying. The MH liaisons work closely with students and school personnel in dealing with this issue and working on programs to address this concern.

Schools are also deeply concerned with preventing violence within the school and in the local community. Mental Health liaisons work with schools to help in ways of education and privately seeing students at risk for violence.

2. Overall Qualifications of the Agency:

Children’s Service Center is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and is Sanctuary Certified. Children’s Service Center has an extensive history of providing quality behavioral health care to the youth in our community and is committed to the highest standard of availability and continuity of care. We have been committed to the needs of children, adolescents and families for 154 years and currently serve well over 5,000 individuals.

A. Experience with this service:

Children’s Service Center has been involved with providing mental health workers for the SAP program since the State of Pennsylvania began the Program in 1984. This fact alone indicates the level of experience that CSC has had in this regard.

B. Experience working with proposed population:

Children’s Service Center has as its primary mission to serve the emotional and psychological needs of children, adolescents and families. The staff has years of experience working with children and adolescents. The SAP program serves the needs of school age children that may be at risk for failure. Schools understand fully the emotional and psychological connection to success in school. Children’s Service Center is in an excellent position to bring this expertise to aid schools in their task of education.

C. Experience coordinating community resources:

The mental health workers are well versed in the community resources. This is based on the workers knowledge of the communities they serve, years of experience in dealing with community resources and being alert to updated needs and newer resources.

D. Current, valid license or certifications:

This program does not require a certification but CSC is Joint Commission Accredited and Sanctuary Certified.

3. Qualifications of Individuals Performing the Service:

The mental health workers for the SAP program are two Master Level clinicians who together represent 27 years of clinical experience working with students, families and schools. They bring a wealth of experience to this mission.

4. Budget:

A. Overall analysis of budget:

Please see attached