

SAP: What Is It? How Can It Help?

The Student Assistance Program (SAP) is designed to assist school personnel in identifying students who are struggling with depression, suicide ideation, and other mental health issues; as well as, drug and alcohol problems which pose a barrier to a student's success. The primary goal of the SAP team is to help students overcome these barriers so they may achieve, remain in school, and advance.

The team consists of professionally trained individuals including school staff (teachers, counselors, administrators, psychologist, nurse), a drug & alcohol prevention specialist, a mental health professional, probation officer, and a representative from the children and youth agency. SAP team members are trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and to make recommendations to assist the student and the parent. When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team will assist the parent and student so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer to treatment; but they may refer for a screening or an assessment for treatment.

The SAP process begins with a referral to the team. Referrals can come from teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, other students, or the student him/herself. The team then collects observable, objective data to determine the steps needed to be taken in order to help the student. Parents are an integral part of the SAP process and their input is very important. If you have or know a child who is struggling due to a problem with drugs, alcohol, depression, suicide ideation, abuse, etc., please make a referral to the SAP team. Referral forms can be found in the guidance office and can be given to any SAP team member. Visit Pocono Mountain's SAP web site at www.pmsd.org/sap/index.html or contact the SAP coordinator. SAP coordinators are: Cheryl Yakavonis (EHS), Stephanie Sluck (WHS), Jennifer Odom (EJHS), Rob Magda (WJHS), Deidre Ditze (SIS), and Laurie Strunk (CRIS). **We are here to help.**