

## SAC QUICKtips: STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development is the primary vehicle to help building staff improve their practice. The focus of Student Assistance staff development is to prepare staff to appropriately identify students to connect to SAP services; to understand the staff role in working with Student Assistance; and to help staff respond appropriately when students ask for help or self-disclose problems.

1. Communicate early in the year that all staff have the responsibility for all students, and the SAP wants to enhance their skill sets in working with students presenting nonacademic challenges.
2. Most of the building professionals have had development in content and curriculum areas. Few have had sufficient training in life issues that prevent students from benefitting from the hard work professionals put into content and curriculum delivery.
3. Create a list of topics that are often connected to your SAP services in which you believe staff overall have not had sufficient training.
4. Prioritize the list so the most significant topics are covered earliest in the year.
5. When possible, utilize community service organizations specializing in topics in your professional development to help prepare presentations and resources for staff and families especially when dealing with topics such as sex trafficking, gender identity, trauma, suicide, substance abuse, and other timely topics.
6. Identify which channels of communication will work best for each topic. Then utilize a variety of channels rather than rely solely on formal presentations.
7. Keep formal presentations as interactive as possible.
8. For each presentation as well as other modes of communication, identify the learning objectives and state those. Identify the skills that will come from the information along with what you hope staff will do with the information.
9. Evaluate staff development presentations as well as other staff development media used to determine effectiveness and success.

Resources on prevention.org – Professional Resources – Student Assistance Center: Gang Assist: A Guide for Schools, Safe, Supportive and Successful Schools – Step by Step, Serious Mental Health Challenges Among Older Adolescents and Young People, Guide on the Principles of Treating Teen Substance Abuse, Model School Policy on Suicide Prevention, School Materials for a Mental Health Friendly Classroom