

STUDENT ASSISTANCE CENTER



PREVENTION FIRST
Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse

Student Assistance Program Implementation Guide

Your first task after Student Assistance Program Development training is to focus your efforts on building a strong team foundation; then move forward to engage staff and students for services. This SAP Implementation Guide builds on that training, and serves as a roadmap to help users achieve a more advanced level of practice in providing Student Assistance services.

Over time, your team can leverage even more tools and resources at Prevention.org – Professional Resources – Student Assistance Center to scale up SAP benefits through the Prevention First website expanding the Student Assistance team’s efforts to provide effective, evidence-based and informed strategies.

Form a Diverse Student Assistance Team

Forming a Student Assistance team is not enough; it is instead a beginning. Broad diversity in team membership allows more effective SAP reach and help to the unique individuals that comprise the school. Effective teams are intentional about who should be on that team along with how team members function together.

Web resource: [Getting Started with Student Assistance Programs; Student Assistance Program Mission and Practices](#)

Establish Team Roles:

- Team Leader: Should be a fixed role, length of term can vary; oversees team functions.
- Meeting Facilitator: Facilitates team meetings, may rotate among team members, guides the team through the agenda, may or may not be a team leader function.
- Case Manager / Facilitator: Assigned when a student is identified as appropriate for SAP services, responsible for managing documentation and data, presents student-of-concern data at the team meeting, may conduct student and parent interviews, may implement interventions with student.

- Recorder: Records basic meeting notes focusing on key discussion points for student cases including interventions, responsibilities and time schedules, may be a rotating role.
- Record Keeper: Maintains SAP files, records data in the student file during the problem-solving meeting, maintains log of all files with case numbers for the year, more effective as a fixed role for a school year.
- Time Manager: Watches time allotments during the problem-solving meeting and alerts team when allotment is reached.
- Communications: Handles communication not designated with the team leader's role, typically focuses on group communication to school personnel, students and parents such as program marketing information.

Web resources: Student Assistance Team Responsibilities and Roles

Leverage Administrative Support

Administrative support significantly benefits SAP regardless of which delivery model is used. Administrators who are champions or give active support are involved in the work of the coordinator or team rather than just passively giving approval. Administrative support appears repeatedly in literature as a key issue in success of any problem-solving team including SAPs.

Tips for Building Administrative Support

- Use data to explain the Student Assistance Program's role in achieving the school's mission including how SAP addresses barriers by increasing school attendance, helping students pay attention, and academic performance by addressing barriers, and reducing lost instructional time due to behavioral problems.
- Use data to demonstrate the SAP's strategies in gaining family involvement with the school particularly in disenfranchised families.
- Use specific examples that explain how the SAP builds bridges between the school and community services and organizations.
- Encourage administrators to attend weekly SAP meetings.

Web resources: SAC Administrative Guide

Detail and Follow Formal Procedures

Any service-providing framework in a school should have clearly articulated procedures. Following are suggestions for SAP procedures to be defined.

- All meeting details including where, when, and how long each meeting will occur
- Each fixed and rotating role within the team along with role descriptions
- Documentation and file management processes
- Parent involvement and notification processes
- Form and data usage
- Referral and identification, problem solving and progress monitoring processes
- Confidentiality guidelines
- Working with other service groups in the school
- Linkage agreements with community service providers
- Identifying and preparing new team members
- Communication with referring staff,

other case-involved staff, and community service providers

Web resources: Student Assistance Team Functional Analysis; Student Assistance Levels of Development Guide; Student Assistance Best Practices Formative Assessment Tools; Student Assistance Program Mission and Practices

Utilize Effective SAP Team Meeting Practices

- Establish a meeting place that affords maximum privacy. SAP focuses on respect for all students and families, and privacy for meetings is a must.
- Use an agenda for each meeting that allows time for new SAP cases, revisiting cases that were previously discussed that are ready for next steps, any progress monitoring reviews, and programmatic details such as changing meeting dates, planning for training, program marketing, etc.
- Set specific time frames for each segment of the agenda, and stay with those timeframes
- Follow your formal procedures for maximum effectiveness
- Start on time – always!!
- Be consistent with how meetings are conducted. Teams function better with predictability.
- State the goals for the meeting at the beginning.
- Walk into each meeting prepared to begin work.
- Maintain a clear sense of purpose and responsibility during every meeting.
- Quickly fill roles needed for the meeting.

- Keep a consistent meeting log for each meeting.
- Follow your team protocols for keeping the meeting on task.
- Use a time keeper to keep the team on task.
- Stay on task. Assign a task manager for the meeting who redirects the team when discussion moves in a direction other than the specific task at hand.
- End each meeting by stating the next meeting date and time, and briefly summarize any agenda items known for that meeting.

Web Resource: Team Effectiveness Qualities

Establish Efficient and Accurate Student Assistance Program Documentation

Documentation processes should be finalized with school administration prior to implementing. Active rather than passive approval for documentation practices should be sought.

Team Log:

- Information is entered into a central electronic or paper log recording key discussion points, decisions, and actions by the team. Use for each team meeting.
- Record in brief statements rather than narratives.
- Protect information falling under HIPPA, substance abuse or mental health record regulations.

Student Case Files:

- Data, decisions, interventions, and progress monitoring information is recorded.

- Record in brief statements.
- Use practices that protect federally confidential and health information.

Establish File Maintenance Procedures

As with documentation practices, file maintenance procedures should be approved by school administration prior to implementation. These procedures allow the SAP to systematically approach an important part of service delivery.

- File maintenance should be a priority and taken as a serious responsibility.
- Students should never have access to student case files; this includes student workers who assist with school files.
- Files should contain data with basic notes on key discussions, interventions, and progress monitoring data.
- Individual completed forms may or may not be stored in the file as determined by administrative preference.
- Files should be stored in secure locations with access limited to approved adults.
- Files may be divided into active and inactive cases. Inactive cases include students that no longer need SAP services and students who have transferred to other districts.
- Inactive cases may be reactivated when students need additional help or transfer back into the school district.

Year-End File Closing:

- All SAP case files should be closed before the end of the school year with notation about the case status at the end of the year.
- If the SAP believes a student would benefit from SAP monitoring at the

beginning of the school year, the student's name can be placed on the monitoring list.

- All SAP files should either be locked in a cabinet for the summer or sealed in a box and placed in a protected location.

Conduct Program Awareness and Staff Development

- Program awareness increases staff, student, and administrative awareness about what SAP is and how to use SAP.
- Staff development increases staff knowledge about student nonacademic barriers, enabling, and appropriate responses to student self-disclosure.

Web resources: Staff Development, SAP Brochure Template; SAP In-Service Agenda and Power Point Template

Additional Resources

The following resources and tools along with other helpful documents and webinars can be found on the Prevention First website (prevention.org) under Professional Resources – Student Assistance Center.

Navigating the Course – a detailed guide for building SAP sustainability.

Student Assistance Program Guidebook: A Resource for Schools – detailed guidance about broader aspects of Student Assistance Programs.

Problem-Solving Team Best Practices Protocol – evidence-based practices to guide the SAP through the screening, problem-solving, and progress monitoring tasks.

SAP Levels of Development Workbook – a guide for newly trained teams for continuing work.

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