

## ***Suggested Terminology for Program Design*** **RE: STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (SAP)**

Student Assistance Programs (SAPs) are delivered by school sites and districts in a multitude of ways, depending on need, resources and political influence. However, similarities exist across programs in the way that students are referred and moved through services. Below is nomenclature that commonly defines the structural process of an implemented Student Assistance Program.

- 1) **Identification:** Students are referred to the program by administration, teachers, classified staff, concerned members of the school community, parents, peers, and even by themselves. This is typically done through a SAP referral form that is tailored to the document's most frequent users, i.e. those in a position to observe students' behavior. Behavioral changes by a student are the most common catalysts for a student's being referred to the SAP. However, an identified reason(s) for referral is not necessarily fact or an indictment, but reflects reasonable concerns based on available data.
- 2) **Background Review:** A review of the concern(s) presented with a student's referral, along with observable behaviors of concern reflected in a student's academic, attendance and discipline files, is conducted by SAP staff. This data helps SAP staff obtain a clearer understanding of the student.
- 3) **Interview (Screening/Evaluation):** SAP staff meet with the student to discuss the reasons for referral and other documented observable behaviors of concern to identify issues. This is a non-clinical approach to sharing observations and dialoguing with the student about possible challenges they are facing. School districts do not provide clinical assessments; rather, a combined student/parent contact is arranged if identified issues/needs require outside resources. Parent(s) and/or the student are referred to appropriate community-based services if such need presents itself during this or any of the following steps.
- 4) **Referral:** Based on the outcome of the interview/evaluation, the student may be referred to district and/or community services that can address identified needs. Typical site services offered include anything from on-site counseling, tutoring and conflict management to specific SAP support and education groups; in some cases, school staff also can refer students to a mental health or substance abuse provider for more advanced professional assessment. For referrals to outside agencies, services are usually provided regardless of income at three levels: as a free service, by a low cost/sliding scale provider, and by a private or third party payee service.
- 5) **Support:** Support/Educational groups are provided by SAP staff to address a variety of issues, including, but not limited to: Insight (exploration of student's relationship with AOD), Concerned Others (exploration of how other's use of AOD affects student), Recovery (support for students choosing to abstain from chemicals), and Anger Management (support for students experiencing their own anger issues). SAPs also support school staff, teachers and, in some cases, family members through trainings and educational events on topics relating to AOD, academics, stress reduction, violence, etc.

- 6) **Follow Up:** Follow-up with students served by the SAP is conducted by SAP staff in varying capacities based on what was learned from the interview/intervention, referral and support process. Consider the following three examples.:
- 1) Student during initial interview reports no issues and refuses service; SAP staff monitors observable behaviors of concern for improvement and re-interviews student if behaviors continue.
  - 2) Referral to an outside agency is given; SAP staff checks in within two weeks to see if student/family follows through with referral.
  - 3) Concerns raised in support/education group require review of observable behaviors of concern and/or parent/student interview; SAP staff initiates and completes.