

NATIONAL MASONIC FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

MMSAT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student Assistance Programs (SAP) are the primary vehicle for schools in Pennsylvania and across our nation for addressing students' behavioral health needs and concerns. SAP links student to behavioral health care services both in schools and in the community. Student Assistance Programs address the barriers to learning due to social, emotional and mental health concerns. One such program is Masonic Model Student Assistance Training which began in Pennsylvania in 1984. Masonic Model Student Assistance Training is designed to address school-based concerns of academics, attendance, health and behavior in students. Our Masonic Model Student Assistance teams are specifically trained to deal with substance use and abuse, depression and suicide and school violence.

The following is an Executive Summary of the latest and most comprehensive evaluation of Student Assistance Programs. The research was conducted by Dr. Carl Fertman, University of Pittsburgh and published in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, November 2003.

In this current study a number of significant conclusion can be documented.

THE LEVEL OF NEED OF AMERICA'S YOUTH

1. One out of four of America's youth are extremely vulnerable and another 1 out of 4 are moderately vulnerable to the negative consequences of engaging in multiple high risk social and health behaviors.
2. Concerns and problems concerning today's families and youth are often too intimidating for families and youth to solve on their own.
3. Eight out of ten of American youth are in need of behavioral health services and may not receive them. (US Surgeon General 2001)

THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

1. Student Assistance Programs confront the barriers to learning faced by students engaging in multiple high-risk social and health behaviors.
2. Student Assistance Programs link children and families to the behavioral health care system, providing the mechanism for schools, communities, families and youth to work together to remove the barriers to learning.
3. Consistently, 9 out of 10 of the students referred were linked to a school program and service with most accessing the recommended service.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

1. Overall, the proportion of students having their needs met through SAP far exceeds the nationally reported findings for youth in need of behavioral health care who, for the most part, do not receive them. (US Surgeon General 2001)
2. Students referred to Student Assistance Programs show improved attendance, a decrease in discipline problems, and positive academic promotion and graduation after their SAP referral and intervention.
 - a. Two out of three referred students improved and stabilized their attendance.
 - b. Approximately 7 out of 10 referred students were either promoted or graduated from high school.
 - c. Two out of three referred students showed reduction in suspensions and positive behavior changes.
3. There is a strong relationship between decreased student drug use and the presence of a Student Assistance team in school. (Scott, Surface, Friedli & Barlow, 1999)
4. A majority of the students that are linked to community services by Student Assistance teams for assessment, access some if not all the recommended services.

We can emphatically report that Student Assistance Programs positively contributes to student academic success and achievement. Student Assistance Programs greatly enhance the relationship between youth and behavioral health care providers. Student Assistance Programs help to create healthy youth and a healthy future America.

REFERENCES

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