



STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CONTACT

Community Services
Advocate. Counsel. Teach.

**Information about
the Student Assistance
Program for parents
and students**





In Group Meetings facilitated by SAP counselors, teens can share their struggles and concerns.

Common issues include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alcohol and other drug use/abuse | Trauma |
| Depression | Relationship challenges |
| Anxiety | Bullying |
| Emotional distress | Gambling |
| Teen pregnancy/parenting | Grief |
| Truancy | Family stressors |
| Housing vulnerability | Body Image/Eating Disorders |
| Basic needs | Abuse/Neglect |
| Sexual health/identity | |

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

Supportive. Accepting. Positive.

SAP By the Numbers:

150: The average number of students seen by one Student Assistance Counselor in a school year.

7,800: Students who have received SAP information, education, support and counseling services annually in all five Syracuse City School District high schools (Corcoran, Fowler, Henninger, Nottingham and Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central), and Cicero-North Syracuse High School in the North Syracuse Central School District.

Did You Know?

Students who receive information about the risks of drugs and alcohol are less likely to use than those who do not.



Students team up with our Student Assistance Program Counselors to promote healthy behaviors and become peer leaders. This photo shows students from area high schools at a recent Heart of New York Teen Institute leadership conference, where they were empowered with the knowledge, skills and confidence to educate and lead their peers to reduce the frequency of substance abuse.

Free. Voluntary.

We can talk about drinking, drugs, gambling, school problems, and anything else bothering us.

We can talk to our SAP counselor about relationships, depression, suicide, family stuff, and sexuality.



They also have peer leadership activities like gay straight alliance or suicide awareness campaigns.

Plus, stress management; resources for pregnant or parenting teen moms and dads; anger management and lots more.

We can get individual or group counseling from a Student Assistance counselor here at school.



* Confidential.

** Confidentiality is maintained under federal regulations; no notations are made in school records.*



Our Student Assistance Program counselors handed out these wristbands to students at Fowler High School during Red Ribbon Week, which promotes healthy alternatives to using drugs and alcohol. This kind of continuous awareness and education that our counselors provide to students throughout the school year promotes diversity among the students as they learn that serious issues impact people from all walks of life.

“Thanks to (my SAP counselor) I’m much better now taking control of myself again and thanks to her help I haven’t had more suicidal thoughts. She probably saved my life.”

— Nottingham High School student

“The Student Assistance Program let me talk to someone confidentially about using drugs and alcohol, which helped me to change.”

— 15-year-old high school student

“If we get a pass from our Student Assistance Counselor, we know that it is important. We trust her judgement.”

— Syracuse City School District teacher



The **Student Assistance Program** is a cooperative program of Contact Community Services, Inc., and participating schools in Onondaga County. Contact Community Services, Inc. provides clinical supervision and full program administration. The building principal is the on-site liaison to the Student Assistance Program counselor, director and supervisor.

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Need more information? Please contact Jeanne Elmer, Director, Student Assistance Program, at (315) 251-1400, ext. 140, or jelmer@contactsyracuse.org, or visit www.contactsyracuse.org to learn more about Contact Community Services, Inc.



“Thank you for listening to me when I was down. I’m happy that I got to know you through my high school years. Keep getting kids involved in the things you did with me.”

— Institute of Technology at Syracuse
Central High School Senior



Services for Students and Families

- Student Assistance counselors lead and advise student groups such as Gay Straight Alliance, Seeds of Peace (promotes peace among diverse populations), Students Against Destructive Decisions, and Teen AIDS Task Force.
- Student Assistance counselors facilitate and lead support and counseling groups such as children of alcoholics/addicts; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) students; and students dealing with grief/loss or substance use. Counselors also provide staff consultation concerning mental health and teen issues and participate in related school committees.
- Student Assistance counselors provide information, resources and interactive educational activities during national health observances such as Drunk-Drugged Driving Awareness Month, Kick Butts Awareness Month, Problem Gambling Awareness Day, Problem Gambling Awareness Month, and Substance Abuse Awareness Month.



Frequently Asked Questions

What kinds of students are involved in the program?

1. The program does not target a specific type of student. A high percentage of the students engaged in counseling are those experiencing grief, trauma, self/family substance abuse and addictions, family/community violence, and issues related to adolescent sexuality and development.

How are students referred to a Student Assistance Program Counselor?

2. Referrals are accepted from all sources: students referring themselves and their peers; school staff and administration; family members; and community members. Referred students will be invited to attend a voluntary session with the counselor to assess for needs and initiate support.

Does counseling work?

3. By providing early intervention and individual-centered services to students, counselors reduce the risk factors for substance abuse and other emotional health difficulties and increase a student's coping skills related to stressors, thus enhancing opportunities for success in school and life. The counselors also help improve the school staff's knowledge of student-related emotional health issues.



Student Assistance Program (SAP) Supportive. Accepting. Positive.



Through the Student Assistance Program, school-based mental health/substance abuse professionals provide free, voluntary and confidential assessments, counseling and referral services to students and their families. SAP is for any student experiencing stress due to personal, peer, family or community-related issues. In addition to one-on-one and small group counseling, the entire student body receives information about the risks associated with substance abuse and gambling through monthly school-wide activities hosted by SAP counselors. For school personnel, consultation is available to increase understanding of students' emotional development. SAP Counselors are currently located in all five Syracuse City School District high schools (Corcoran, Fowler, Henninger, Nottingham and Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central), and Cicero-North Syracuse High School in the North Syracuse Central School District. Other school districts may be added in the future.





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