Student Assistance Program School-based Prevention and Intervention Services

Overview

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in partnership with the state's Educational Service Districts, and with funding from the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), oversees the school-based prevention and intervention component of the Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative. The program supports placing trained and certified Student Assistance Professionals (SAPs) in 91 middle and high schools. The SAP services are a multi-tiered approach, where prevention services are provided to the entire school community (universal prevention).

Group or individual counseling (selected/indicated prevention and intervention) is provided to students who are at-risk or are using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs.

Target population for selected/indicated services:

- Students impacted by substance use in the family
- Students impacted by their own substance use, abuse or addiction
- Students in recovery
- Students who are at risk for substance use or abuse

Selected/indicated prevention/intervention services:

Screening and referral services. Students receiving services are screened with the GAIN-SS and, if necessary, referred to appropriate services.

Support groups. SAPs provide 8-12 week counseling groups, including:

- At Risk Group - Education and skill building for students at risk of using/abusing alcohol, tobacco or other drugs (ATOD).
- Intervention Group - For students experimenting, using or abusing ATOD.
- Affected Others Group - For students impacted by substance use in the family.
- Recovery Group - For students in recovery from substance use.
- Seniors Group – For seniors who are ambivalent about leaving school and home, and/or who have "senioritis." The emphasis is on preventing students from increasing their use of ATOD to deal with senior stress.
- Newcomers Group – For students new to the school, to help them form connections and adapt to a new school/community.

Washington State
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Universal school-wide prevention services:

Classroom instruction. For schools where a SAP is placed, all students in their first year of middle school and high school receive prevention education. Topics include:

- Being an Adolescent
- ATODs
- Relationships: Friends and Family
- Skills for Coping

Establish student leadership group. The purpose of the student leadership group is to empower students to:

- Change the culture and norms of the students to value being drug free
- Plan activities to decrease the stigma of interaction with the prevention/intervention specialist
- Generate self and peer referrals

Participation in student assistance/child study team. If the school has an existing team, the SAP participates in meetings where students of concern are discussed; this team participation ensures that students in need of services are referred to the program.

Training and information dissemination to school staff. The purpose is to:

- Increase the awareness of ATOD use and its impact
- Increase knowledge of signs and symptoms of ATOD use, and issues children face when their parents misuse alcohol or other drugs
- Decrease favorable attitudes toward ATOD use

Parent engagement

- Outreach to parents of discipline-referred students and involve them in the program
- Disseminate parent newsletters focused on ATOD prevention strategies
- Attend parent teacher conferences and provide ATOD information
- Inform parents of school and community events and encourage participation

Results

The Student Assistance Program undergoes annual program evaluation. Results over time consistently show that students who participate in intervention services increase their understanding of the risk of using substances, and reduce or delay the onset of their use. For more detail on program outcomes, please see the Student Assistance Annual Reports at k12.wa.us.

Contact

Mandy Paradise, Student Assistance Program Supervisor
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
mandy.paradise@k12.wa.us